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May 9-1899

May 9 1899

Dresden Edition

THE WORKS

OF

Robert G. Ingersoll

"EVERY BRAIN IS A FIELD WHERE NATURE SOWS THE SEEDS OF THOUGHT, AND THE CROP DEPENDS UPON THE SOIL."

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME VII.

DISCUSSIONS

NEW YORK
THE DRESDEN PUBLISHING CO.,
C. P. FARRELL
MCMXV

818.3
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MY REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

MY REVIEWERS REVIEWED.*

I.

AGAINST the aspersions of the pulpit and the religious press, I offer in evidence this magnificent audience. Although I represent but a small part of the holy cause of intellectual liberty, even that part shall not be defiled or smirched by a single personality. Whatever I say, I shall say because I believe it will tend to make this world grander, man nearer just, the father kinder, the mother more loving, the children more affectionate, and because I believe it will make an additional flower bloom in the pathway of every one who hears me.

In the first place, what have I said? What has been my offence? What have I done? I am spoken of by the clergy as though I were a wolf that in the absence of the good shepherd had fattened upon his innocent flock. What have I said?

I delivered a lecture entitled, "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child." In that lecture I said that

*This lecture was delivered by Col. Ingersoll in San Francisco Cal., June 27, 1877. It was a reply to various clergymen of that city, who had made violent attacks upon him after the delivery of his lectures, "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child," and "The Ghosts."

man was entitled to physical and intellectual liberty. I defined physical liberty to be the right to do right; the right to do anything that did not interfere with the real happiness of others. I defined intellectual liberty to be the right to think right, and the right to think wrong—provided you did your best to think right.

This must be so, because thought is only an instrumentality by which we seek to ascertain the truth. Every man has the right to think, whether his thought is in reality right or wrong; and he cannot be accountable to any being for thinking wrong. There is upon man, so far as thought is concerned, the obligation to think the best he can, and to honestly express his best thought. Whenever he finds what is right, or what he honestly believes to be the right, he is less than a man if he fears to express his conviction before an assembled world.

The right to do right is my definition of physical liberty. "The right of one human being ceases where the right of another commences." My definition of intellectual liberty is, the right to think, whether you think right or wrong, provided you do your best to think right.

I believe in Liberty, Fraternity and Equality—the Blessed Trinity of Humanity.

I believe in Observation, Reason and Experience —the Blessed Trinity of Science.

I believe in Man, Woman and Child—the Blessed Trinity of Life and Joy.

I have said, and still say, that you have no right to endeavor by force to compel another to think your way—that man has no right to compel his fellow-man to adopt his creed, by torture or social ostracism. I have said, and still say, that even an infinite God has and can have no right to compel by force or threats even the meanest of mankind to accept a dogma abhorrent to his mind. As a matter of fact such a power is incapable of being exercised. You may compel a man to say that he has changed his mind. You may force him to say that he agrees with you. In this way, however, you make hypocrites, not converts. Is it possible that a god wishes the worship of a slave? Does a god desire the homage of a coward? Does he really long for the adoration of a hypocrite? Is it possible that he requires the worship of one who dare not think? If I were a god it seems to me that I had rather have the esteem and love of one grand, brave man, with plenty of heart and plenty of brain, than the blind worship, the ignorant adoration, the trembling homage of a universe of men afraid to reason. And yet I am warned by

the orthodox guardians of this great city not to think. I am told that I am in danger of hell; that for me to express my honest convictions is to excite the wrath of God. They inform me that unless I believe in a certain way, meaning their way, I am in danger of everlasting fire.

There was a time when these threats whitened the faces of men with fear. That time has substantially passed away. For a hundred years hell has been gradually growing cool, the flames have been slowly dying out, the brimstone is nearly exhausted, the fires have been burning lower and lower, and the climate gradually changing. To such an extent has the change already been effected that if I were going there to-night I would take an overcoat and a box of matches.

They say that the eternal future of man depends upon his belief. I deny it. A conclusion honestly arrived at by the brain cannot possibly be a crime; and the man who says it is, does not think so. The god who punishes it as a crime is simply an infamous tyrant. As for me, I would a thousand times rather go to perdition and suffer its torments with the brave, grand thinkers of the world, than go to heaven and keep the company of a god who would damn his children for an honest belief.

The next thing I have said is, that woman is the equal of man; that she has every right that man has, and one more—the right to be protected, because she is the weaker. I have said that marriage should be an absolutely perfect partnership of body and soul; that a man should treat his wife like a splendid flower, and that she should fill his life with perfume and with joy. I have said that a husband had no right to be morose; that he had no right to assassinate the sunshine and murder the joy of life.

I have said that when he went home he should go like a ray of light, and fill his house so full of joy that it would burst out of the doors and windows and illumine even the darkness of night. I said that marriage was the holiest, highest, the most sacred institution among men; that it took millions of years for woman to advance from the condition of absolute servitude, from the absolute slavery where the Bible found her and left her, up to the position she occupies at present. I have pleaded for the rights of woman, for the rights of wives, and what is more, for the rights of little children. I have said that they could be governed by affection, by love, and that my heart went out to all the children of poverty and of crime; to the children that live in

the narrow streets and in the sub-cellars; to the children that run and hide when they hear the footsteps of a brutal father, the children that grow pale when they hear their names pronounced even by a mother; to all the little children, the flotsam and jetsam upon the wide, rude sea of life. I have said that my heart goes out to them one and all; I have asked fathers and mothers to cease beating their own flesh and blood. I have said to them, When your child does wrong, put your arms around him; let him feel your heart beat against his. It is easier to control your child with a kiss than with a club.

For expressing these sentiments, I have been denounced by the religious press and by ministers in their pulpits as a demon, as an enemy of order, as a fiend, as an infamous man. Of this, however, I make no complaint. A few years ago they would have burned me at the stake and I should have been compelled to look upon their hypocritical faces through flame and smoke. They cannot do it now or they would. One hundred years ago I would have been burned, simply for pleading for the rights of men. Fifty years ago I would have been imprisoned. Fifty years ago my wife and my children would have been torn from my arms in the name of the most merciful God. Twenty-five years ago I

could not have made a living in the United States at the practice of law; but I can now. I would not then have been allowed to express my thought; but I can now, and I will. And when I think about the liberty I now enjoy, the whole horizon is illuminated with glory and the air is filled with wings.

I then delivered another lecture entitled "Ghosts," in which I sought to show that man had been controlled by phantoms of his own imagination; in which I sought to show these imps of darkness, these devils, had all been produced by superstition; in which I endeavored to prove that man had groveled in the dust before monsters of his own creation; in which I endeavored to demonstrate that the many had delved in the soil that the few might live in idleness, that the many had lived in caves and dens that the few might dwell in palaces of gold; in which I endeavored to show that man had received nothing from these ghosts except hatred, except ignorance, except unhappiness, and that in the name of phantoms man had covered the face of the world with tears. And for this, I have been assailed, in the name, I presume, of universal forgiveness. So far as any argument I have produced is concerned, it cannot in any way make the slightest difference whether I am a good or a bad

man. It cannot in any way make the slightest difference whether my personal character is good or bad. That is not the question, though, so far as I am concerned, I am willing to stake the whole question upon that issue. That is not, however, the thing to be discussed, nor the thing to be decided. The question is, whether what I said is true.

I did say that from ghosts we had obtained certain things—among other things a book known as the Bible. From the ghosts we received that book; and the believers in ghosts pretend that upon that book rests the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul. This I deny.

Whether or not the soul is immortal is a fact in nature and cannot be changed by any book whatever. If I am immortal, I am. If I am not, no book can render me so. It is no more wonderful that I should live again than that I do live.

The doctrine of immortality is not based upon any book. The foundation of that idea is not a creed. The idea of immortality, which, like a sea, has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, beating with its countless waves of hope and fear against the shores and rocks of fate and time, was not born of any book, was not born of a creed. It is not the child of any religion. It was born of human affection;

and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death. It is the eternal bow —Hope shining upon the tears of Grief.

I did say that these ghosts taught that human slavery was right. If there is a crime beneath the shining stars it is the crime of enslaving a human being. Slavery enslaves not only the slave, but the master as well. When you put a chain upon the limbs of another, you put a fetter also upon your own brain. I had rather be a slave than a slave-holder. The slave can at least be just—the slave-holder cannot. I had rather be robbed than be a robber. I had rather be stolen from than to be a thief. I have said, and I do say, that the Bible upheld, sustained and sanctioned the institution of human slavery; and before I get through I will prove it.

I said that to the same book we are indebted, to a great degree, for the doctrine of witchcraft. Relying upon its supposed sacred texts, people were hanged and their bodies burned for getting up storms at sea with the intent of drowning royal vermin. Every possible offence was punished under the name of witchcraft, from souring beer to high treason.

I also said, and I still say, that the book we obtained from the ghosts, for the guidance of man, upheld the infamy of infamies, called polygamy; and I will also prove that. And the same book teaches, not political liberty, but political tyranny.

I also said that the author of the book given us by the ghosts knew nothing about astronomy, still less about geology, still less, if possible, about medicine, and still less about legislation.

This is what I have said concerning the aristocracy of the air. I am well aware that having said it I ought to be able to prove the truth of my words. I have said these things. No one ever said them in better nature than I have. I have not the slightest malice—a victor never felt malice. As soon as I had said these things, various gentlemen felt called upon to answer me. I want to say that if there is anything I like in the world it is fairness. And one reason I like it so well is that I have had so little of it. I can say, if I wish, extremely mean and hateful things. I have read a great many religious papers and discussions and think that I now know all the infamous words in our language. I know how to account for every noble action by a mean and wretched motive, and that, in my judgment, embraces nearly the entire science of modern

theology. The moment I delivered a lecture upon "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child," I was charged with having said that there is nothing back of nature, and that nature with its infinite arms embraces everything; and thereupon I was informed that I believed in nothing but matter and force, that I believed only in earth, that I did not believe in spirit. If by spirit you mean that which thinks, then I am a believer in spirit. If you mean by spirit the something that says "I," the something that reasons, hopes, loves and aspires, then I am a believer in spirit. Whatever spirit there is in the universe must be a natural thing, and not superimposed upon nature. All that I can say is, that whatever is, is natural. And there is as much goodness, in my judgment, as much spirit in this world as in any other; and you are just as near the heart of the universe here as you can be anywhere. One of your clergymen says in answer, as he supposes, to me, that there is matter and force and spirit. Well, can matter exist without force? What would keep it together? What would keep the finest possible conceivable atom together unless there was force? Can you imagine such a thing as matter without force? Can you conceive of force without matter? Can you conceive of force floating

about attached to nothing? Can you possibly conceive of this? No human being can conceive of force without matter. "You cannot conceive of force being harnessed or hitched to matter as you would hitch horses to a carriage." You cannot. Now, what is spirit? They say spirit is the first thing that was. It seems to me, however, as though spirit was the blossom, the fruit of all, not the commencement. They say it was first. Very well. Spirit without force, a spirit without any matter—what would that spirit do? No force, no matter!—a spirit living in an infinite vacuum. What would such a spirit turn its particular attention to? This spirit, according to these theologians, created the world, the universe; and if it did, there must have been a time when it commenced to create; and back of that there must have been an eternity spent in absolute idleness. Now, is it possible that a spirit existed during an eternity without any force and without any matter? Is it possible that force could exist without matter or spirit? Is it possible that matter could exist alone, if by matter you mean something without force? The only answer I can give to all these questions is, I do not know. For my part, I do not know what spirit is, if there is any. I do not know what matter is, neither am I ac-

quainted with the elements of force. If you mean by matter that which I can touch, that which occupies space, then I believe in matter. If you mean by force anything that can overcome weight, that can overcome what we call gravity or inertia; if you mean by force that which moves the molecules of matter, or the movement itself, then I believe in force. If you mean by spirit that which thinks and loves, then I believe in spirit. There is, however, no propriety in wasting any time about the science of metaphysics. I will give you my definition of metaphysics: Two fools get together; each admits what neither can prove, and thereupon both of them say, "hence we infer." That is all there is of metaphysics.

These gentlemen, however, say to me that all my doctrine about the treatment of wives and children, all my ideas of the rights of man, all these are wrong, because I am not exactly correct as to my notion of spirit. They say that spirit existed first, at least an eternity before there was any force or any matter. Exactly how spirit could act without force we do not understand. That we must take upon credit. How spirit could create matter without force is a serious question, and we are too reverent to press such an inquiry. We are bound to be satisfied, however, that

spirit is entirely independent of force and matter, and any man who denies this must be "a malevolent and infamous wretch."

Another reverend gentleman proceeds to denounce all I have said as the doctrine of negation. And we are informed by him—speaking I presume from experience—that negation is a poor thing to die by. He tells us that the last hours are the grand testing hours. They are the hours when atheists disown their principles and infidels bewail their folly—"that Voltaire and Thomas Paine wrote sharply against Christianity, but their death-bed scenes are too harrowing for recital"—He also states that "another French infidel philosopher tried in vain to fortify Voltaire, but that a stronger man than Voltaire had taken possession of him, and he cried 'Retire! it is you that have brought me to my present state—Begone! what a rich glory you have brought me.'" This, my friends, is the same old, old falsehood that has been repeated again and again by the lips of hatred and hypocrisy. There is not in one of these stories a solitary word of truth; and every intelligent man knows all these death-bed accounts to be entirely and utterly false. They are taken, however, by the mass of the church as evidence that all opposition to Christianity, so-called, fills the bed of the dying in-

fidel and scoffer with serpents and scorpions. So far as my experience goes, the bad die in many instances as placidly as the good. I have sometimes thought that a hardened wretch, upon whose memory is engraved the record of nearly every possible crime, dies without a shudder, without a tremor, while some grand, good man, remembering during his last moments an unkind word spoken to a stranger, it may be in the heat of anger, dies with remorseful words upon his lips. Nearly every murderer who is hanged, dies with an immensity of nerve, but I never thought it proved that he had lived a good and useful life. Neither have I imagined that it sanctified the crime for which he suffered death. The fact is, that when man approaches natural death, his powers, his intellectual faculties fail and grow dim. He becomes a child. He has less and less sense. And just in proportion as he loses his reasoning powers, he goes back to the superstitions of his childhood. The scenes of youth cluster about him and he is again in the lap of his mother. Of this very fact, there is not a more beautiful description than that given by Shakespeare when he takes that old mass of wit and filth, Jack Falstaff, in his arms, and Mrs Quickly says: "A' made a finer end, and went away, an it had been my christom child; a' parted ev'n just between twelve and one,

ev'n at the turning o' the tide ; for after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' end, I knew there was but one way ; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled of green fields." As the genius of Shakespeare makes Falstaff a child again upon sunny slopes, decked with daisies, so death takes the dying back to the scenes of their childhood, and they are clasped once more to the breasts of mothers. They go back, for the reason that nearly every superstition in the world has been sanctified by some sweet and placid mother. Remember, the superstition has never sanctified the mother, but the mother has sanctified the superstition. The young Mohammedan, who now lies dying upon some field of battle, thinks sweet and tender thoughts of home and mother, and will, as the blood oozes from his veins, repeat some holy verse from the blessed Koran. Every superstition in the world that is now held sacred has been made so by mothers, by fathers, by the recollections of home. I know what it has cost the noble, the brave, the tender, to throw away every superstition, although sanctified by the memory of those they loved. Whoever has thrown away these superstitions has been pursued by his fellow-men. From the day of the death of Voltaire the church has pursued him as though he had

been the vilest criminal. A little over one hundred years ago, Catholicism, the inventor of instruments of torture, red with the innocent blood of millions, felt in its heartless breast the dagger of Voltaire. From that blow the Catholic Church never can recover. Livid with hatred she launched at her assassin the curse of Rome, and ignorant Protestants have echoed that curse. For myself, I like Voltaire, and whenever I think of that name, it is to me as a plume floating above some grand knight—a knight who rides to a walled city and demands an unconditional surrender. I like him. He was once imprisoned in the Bastile, and while in that frightful fortress—and I like to tell it—he changed his name. His name was Francois Marie Arouet. In his gloomy cell he changed this name to Voltaire, and when some sixty years afterward the Bastile was torn down to the very dust, "Voltaire" was the battle cry of the destroyers who did it. I like him because he did more for religious toleration than any other man who ever lived or died. I admire him because he did more to do away with torture in civil proceedings than any other man. I like him because he was always upon the side of justice, upon the side of progress. I like him in spite of his faults, because he had many and splendid virtues. I like him because his doctrines have never

brought unhappiness to any country. I like him because he hated tyranny; and when he died he died as serenely as ever mortal died; he spoke to his servant recognizing him as a man. He said to him, calling him by name: "My friend, farewell." These were the last words of Voltaire. And this was the only frightful scene enacted at his bed of death. I like Voltaire, because for half a century he was the intellectual emperor of Europe. I like him, because from his throne at the foot of the Alps he pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Christendom.

I will give to any clergyman in the city of San Francisco a thousand dollars in gold to substantiate the story that the death of Voltaire was not as peaceful as the coming of the dawn. The same absurd story is told of Thomas Paine. Thomas Paine was a patriot—he was the first man in the world to write these words: "THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF AMERICA." He was the first man to convince the American people that they ought to separate themselves from Great Britain. "His pen did as much, to say the least, for the liberty of America, as the sword of Washington." The men who have enjoyed the benefit of his heroic services repay them with slander and calumny. If

there is in this world a crime, ingratitude is a crime. And as for myself, I am not willing to receive anything from any man without making at least an acknowledgment of my obligation. Yet these clergymen, whose very right to stand in their pulpits and preach, was secured to them by such men as Thomas Paine, delight in slandering the reputation of that great man. They tell their hearers that he died in fear,—that he died in agony, hearing devils rattle chains, and that the infinite God condescended to frighten a dying man. I will give one thousand dollars in gold to any clergyman in San Francisco who will substantiate the truth of the absurd stories concerning the death of Thomas Paine. There is not one word of truth in these accounts; not one word.

Let me ask one thing, and let me ask it, if you please, in what is called a reverent spirit. Suppose that Voltaire and Thomas Paine, and Volney and Hume and Hobbes had cried out when dying "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" what would the clergymen of this city then have said?

To resort to these foolish calumnies about the great men who have opposed the superstitions of the world, is in my judgment, unbecoming any intelligent man. The real question is not, who is afraid to

die? The question is, who is right? The great question is not, who died right, but who lived right? There is infinitely more responsibility in living than in dying. The moment of death is the most unimportant moment of life. Nothing can be done then. You cannot even do a favor for a friend, except to remember him in your will. It is a moment when life ceases to be of value. While living, while you have health and strength, you can augment the happiness of your fellow-men; and the man who has made others happy need not be afraid to die. Yet these believers, as they call themselves, these believers who hope for immortality—thousands of them, will rob their neighbors, thousands of them will do numberless acts of injustice, when, according to their belief, the witnesses of their infamy will live forever; and the men whom they have injured and outraged, will meet them in every glittering star through all the ages yet to be.

As for me, I would rather do a generous action, and read the record in the grateful faces of my fellow-men.

These gentlemen who attack me are orthodox now, but the men who started their churches were heretics.

The first Presbyterian was a heretic. The first

Baptist was a heretic. The first Congregationalist was a heretic. The first Christian was denounced as a blasphemer. And yet these heretics, the moment they get numerous enough to be in the majority in some locality, begin to call themselves orthodox. Can there be any impudence beyond this?

The first Baptist, as I said before, was a heretic; and he was the best Baptist that I have ever heard anything about. I always liked him. He was a good man—Roger Williams. He was the first man, so far as I know, in this country, who publicly said that the soul of man should be free. And it was a wonder to me that a man who had sense enough to say that, could think that any particular form of baptism was necessary to salvation. It does strike me that a man of great brain and thought could not possibly think the eternal welfare of a human being, the question whether he should dwell with angels, or be tossed upon eternal waves of fire, should be settled by the manner in which he had been baptized. That seems to me so utterly destitute of thought and heart, that it is a matter of amazement to me that any man ever looked upon the ordinance of baptism as of any importance whatever. If we were at the judgment seat to-night, and the Supreme Being, in our hearing, should ask a man:

"Have you been a good man?" and the man replied:

"Tolerably good."

"Did you love your wife and children?"

"Yes."

"Did you try and make them happy?"

"Yes."

"Did you try and make your neighbors happy?"

"Yes, I paid my debts: I gave heaping measure, and I never cared whether I was thanked for it or not."

Suppose the Supreme Being then should say:

"Were you ever baptized?" and the man should reply:

"I am sorry to say I never was."

Could a solitary person of sense hear that question asked, by the Supreme Being, without laughing, even if he knew that his own case was to be called next?

I happened to be in the company of six or seven Baptist elders—how I ever got into such bad company, I don't know,—and one of them asked what I thought about baptism. Well, I never thought much about it; did not know much about it; didn't want to say anything, but they insisted upon it. I said, "Well, I'll give you my opinion—with soap, baptism is a good thing."

The Reverend Mr. Guard has answered me, as I am informed, upon several occasions. I have read the reports of his remarks, and have boiled them down. He said some things about me not entirely pleasant, which I do not wish to repeat. In his reply he takes the ground :

First. That the Bible is not an immoral book, because he swore upon it or by it when he joined the Masons.

Second. He excuses Solomon for all his crimes upon the supposition that he had softening of the brain, or a fatty degeneration of the heart.

Third. That the Hebrews had the right to slay all the inhabitants of Canaan, according to the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest." He takes the ground that the destruction of these Canaanites, the ripping open of women with child by the sword of war, was an act of sublime mercy. He justifies a war of extermination; he applauds every act of cruelty and murder. He says that the Canaanites ought to have been turned from their homes ; that men guilty of no crime except fighting for their country, old men with gray hairs, old mothers and little, dimpled, prattling children, ought to have been sacrificed upon the altar of war ; that it was an act of sublime mercy to plunge the sword of religious

persecution into the bodies of all, old and young. This is what the reverend gentleman is pleased to call mercy. If this is mercy let us have injustice. If there is in the heavens such a God I am sorry that man exists. All this, however, is justified upon the ground that God has the right to do as he pleases with the being he has created. This I deny. Such a doctrine is infamously false. Suppose I could take a stone and in one moment change it into a sentient, hoping, loving human being, would I have the right to torture it? Would I have the right to give it pain? No one but a fiend would either exercise or justify such a right. Even if there is a God who created us all he has no such right. Above any God that can exist, in the infinite serenity forever sits the figure of justice; and this God, no matter how great and infinite he may be, is bound to do justice.

Fourth. That God chose the Jews and governed them personally for thousands of years, and drove out the Canaanites in order that his peculiar people might not be corrupted by the example of idolaters; that he wished to make of the Hebrews a great nation, and that, consequently, he was justified in destroying the original inhabitants of that country. It seems to me that the end hardly justified the means. According to the account, God governed

the Jews personally for many ages and succeeded in civilizing them to that degree, that they crucified him the first opportunity they had. Such an administration can hardly be called a success.

Fifth. The reverend gentleman seems to think that the practice of polygamy after all is not a bad thing when compared with the crime of exhibiting a picture of Antony and Cleopatra. Upon the corrupting influence of such pictures he descants at great length, and attacks with all the bitterness of the narrow theologian the masterpieces of art. Allow me to say one word about art. That is one of the most beautiful words in our language—Art. And it never seemed to me necessary for art to go in partnership with a rag. I like the paintings of Angelo, of Raffaelle. I like the productions of those splendid souls that put their ideas of beauty upon the canvas uncovered.

"There are brave souls in every land
Who worship nature, grand and nude,
And who with swift indignant hand
Tear off the fig leaves of the prude."

Sixth. That it may be true that the Bible sanctions slavery, but that it is not an immoral book even if it does.

I can account for these statements, for these argu-

ments, only as the reverend gentleman has accounted for the sins of Solomon—"by a softening of the brain, or a fatty degeneration of the heart."

It does seem to me that if I were a Christian, and really thought my fellow-man was going down to the bottomless pit; that he was going to misery and agony forever, it does seem to me that I would try and save him. It does seem to me, that instead of having my mouth filled with epithets and invectives; instead of drawing the lips of malice back from the teeth of hatred, it seems to me that my eyes would be filled with tears. It seems to me that I would do what little I could to reclaim him. I would talk to him and of him, in kindness. I would put the arms of affection about him. I would not speak of him as though he were a wild beast. I would not speak to him as though he were a brute. I would think of him as a man, as a man liable to eternal torture among the damned, and my heart would be filled with sympathy, not hatred—my eyes with tears, not scorn.

If there is anything pitiable, it is to see a man so narrowed and withered by the blight and breath of superstition, as cheerfully to defend the most frightful crimes of which we have a record—a man so hardened and petrified by creed and dogma that he

hesitates not to defend even the institution of human slavery—so lost to all sense of pity that he applauds murder and rapine as though they were acts of the loftiest self-denial.

The next gentleman who has endeavored to answer what I have said, is the Rev. Samuel Robinson. This he has done in his sermon entitled "Ghosts against God or Ingersoll against Honesty." I presume he imagines himself to be the defendant in both cases.

This gentleman apologized for attending an infidel lecture, upon the ground that he had to contribute to the support of a "materialistic demon." To say the least, this is not charitable. But I am satisfied. I am willing to exchange facts for epithets. I fare so much better than did the infidels in the olden time that I am more than satisfied. It is a little thing that I bear.

The brave men of the past endured the instruments of torture. They were stretched upon racks; their feet were crushed in iron boots; they stood upon the shores of exile and gazed with tearful eyes toward home and native land. They were taken from their firesides, from their wives, from their children; they were taken to the public square; they were chained to stakes, and their ashes

were scattered by the countless hands of hatred. I am satisfied. The disciples of fear cannot touch me.

This gentlemen hated to contribute a cent to the support of a "materialistic demon." When I saw that statement I will tell you what I did. I knew the man's conscience must be writhing in his bosom to think that he had contributed a dollar toward my support, toward the support of a "materialistic demon." I wrote him a letter and I said:

"My Dear Sir: In order to relieve your conscience of the crime of having contributed to the support of an unbeliever in ghosts, I hereby enclose the amount you paid to attend my lecture." I then gave him a little good advice. I advised him to be charitable, to be kind, and regretted exceedingly that any man could listen to one of my talks for an hour and a half and not go away satisfied that all men had the same right to think.

This man denied having received the money, but it was traced to him through a blot on the envelope.

This gentleman avers that everything that I said about persecution is applicable to the Catholic Church only. That is what he says. The Catholics have probably persecuted more than any other church, simply because that church has had more power,

simply because it has been more of a church. It has to-day a better organization, and as a rule, the Catholics come nearer believing what they say about their church than other Christians do. Was it a Catholic persecution that drove the Puritan fathers from England? Was it not the storm of Episcopal persecution that filled the sails of the Mayflower? Was it not a Protestant persecution that drove the Ark and Dove to America? Let us be honest. Who went to Scotland and persecuted the Presbyterians? Who was it that chained to the stake that splendid girl by the sands of the sea, for not saying "God save the king"? She was worthy to have been the mother of Cæsar. She would not say "God save the king," but she would say "God save the king, if it be God's will." Protestants ordered her to say "God save the king," and no more. She said, "I will not," and they chained her to a stake in the sand and allowed her to be drowned by the rising of the inexorable tide. Who did this? Protestants. Who drove Roger Williams from Massachusetts? Protestants. Who sold white Quaker children into slavery? Protestants. Who cut out the tongues of Quakers? Who burned and destroyed men and women and children charged with impossible crimes? Protestants. The Protes-

tants have persecuted exactly to the extent of their power. The Catholics have done the same.

I want, however, to be just. The first people to pass an act of religious toleration in the New World were the Catholics of Maryland. The next were the Baptists of Rhode Island, led by Roger Williams. The Catholics passed the act of religious toleration, and after the Protestants got into power again in England, and also in the colony of Maryland, they repealed the law of toleration and passed another law declaring the Catholics from under the protection of all law. Afterward, the Catholics again got into power and had the generosity and magnanimity to re-enact the old law. And, so far as I know, it is the only good record upon the subject of religious toleration the Catholics have in this world, and I am always willing to give them credit for it.

This gentleman also says that infidelity has done nothing for the world in the development of the arts and sciences. Does he not know that nearly every man who took a forward step was denounced by the church as a heretic and infidel? Does he not know that the church has in all ages persecuted the astronomers, the geologists, the logicians? Does he not know that even to-day the church slanders

and maligns the foremost men? Has he ever heard of Tyndall, of Huxley? Is he acquainted with John W. Draper, one of the leading minds of the world? Did he ever hear of Auguste Comte, the great Frenchman? Did he ever hear of Descartes, of Laplace, of Spinoza? In short, has he ever heard of a man who took a step in advance of his time?

Orthodoxy never advances. When it advances, it ceases to be orthodoxy and becomes heresy. Orthodoxy is putrefaction. It is intellectual cloaca; it cannot advance. What the church calls infidelity is simply free thought. Every man who really owns his own brain is, in the estimation of the church, an infidel.

There is a paper published in this city called *The Occident*. The Editor has seen fit to speak of me, and of the people who have assembled to hear me, in the lowest, vilest and most scurrilous terms possible. I cannot afford to reply in the same spirit. He alleges that the people who assemble to hear me are the low, the debauched and the infamous. The man who reads that paper ought to read it with tongs. It is a Presbyterian sheet; and would gladly treat me as John Calvin treated Castalio. Castalio was the first minister in the history of Christendom

who acknowledged the innocence of honest error, and John Calvin followed him like a sleuth-hound of perdition. He called him a "dog of Satan;" said that he had crucified Christ afresh; and pursued him to the very grave. The editor of this paper is still warming his hands at the fire that burned Servetus. He has in his heart the same fierce hatred of everything that is free. But what right have we to expect anything good of a man who believes in the eternal damnation of infants?

There may have been sometime in the history of the world a worse religion than Old School Presbyterianism, but if there ever was, from cannibalism to civilization, I have never heard of it.

I make a distinction between the members and the creed of that church. I know many who are a thousand times better than the creed—good, warm and splendid friends of mine. I would do anything in the world for them. And I have said to them a hundred times, "You are a thousand times better than your creed." But when you come down to the doctrine of the damnation of infants, it is the deformity of deformities. The editor of this paper is engaged in giving the world the cheerful doctrines of fore-ordination and damnation—those twin comforts of the Presbyterian creed, and warning them

against the frightful effects of reasoning in any manner for themselves. He regards the intellectually free as the lowest, the vilest and the meanest, as men who wish to sin, as men who are longing to commit crime, men who are anxious to throw off all restraint.

My friends, every chain thrown from the body puts an additional obligation upon the soul. Every man who is free, puts a responsibility upon his brain and upon his heart. You, who never want responsibility, give your souls to some church. You, who never want the feeling that you are under obligation to yourselves, give your souls away. But if you are willing to feel and meet responsibility; if you feel that you must give an account not only to yourselves but to every human being whom you injure, then you must be free. Where there is no freedom, there can be no responsibility.

It is a mystery to me why the editors of religious papers are so malicious, why they endeavor to answer argument with calumny. Is it because they feel the sceptre slowly slipping from their hands? Is it the result of impotent rage? Is it because there is being written upon every orthodox brain a certificate of intellectual inferiority?

This same editor assures his readers that what I

say is not worth answering, and yet he devotes column after column of his journal to that very purpose. He states that I am no speaker, no orator ; and upon the same page admits that he did not hear me, giving as a reason that he does not think it right to pay money for such a purpose. Recollect, that in a religious paper, a man who professes honesty, criticises a statue or a painting, condemns it, and at the end of the criticism says that he never saw it. He criticises what he calls the oratory of a man, and at the end says, "I never heard him, and I never saw him."

As a matter of fact, I have never heard of any of these gentlemen who thought it necessary to hear what any man said in order to answer him.

The next gentleman who answered me is the Rev. Mr. Ijams. And I must say, so far as I can see, in his argument, or in his mode of treatment, he is a kind and considerate gentleman. He makes several mistakes as to what I really said, but the fault I suppose must have been in the report. I am made to say in the report of his sermon, "There is no sacred place in all the universe." What I did say was, "There is no sacred place in all the universe of thought. There is nothing too holy to be investigated, nothing too divine to be understood. The

fields of thought are fenceless, and without a wall." I say this to-night.

Mr. Ijams also says that I had declared that man had not only the right to do right, but also the right to do wrong. What I really said was, man has the right to do right, and the right to think right, and the right to think wrong. Thought is a means of ascertaining truth, a mode by which we arrive at conclusions. And if no one has a right to think, unless he thinks right, he would only have the right to think upon self-evident propositions. In all respects, with the exception of these misstatements to which I have called your attention, so far as I can see, Mr. Ijams was perfectly fair, and treated me as though I had the ordinary rights of a human being. I take this occasion to thank him.

A great many papers, a great many people, a good many ministers and a multitude of men, have had their say, and have expressed themselves with the utmost freedom. I cannot reply to them all. I can only reply to those who have made a parade of answering me. Many have said it is not worth answering, and then proceeded to answer. They have said, he has produced no argument, and then have endeavored to refute it. They have said it is simply the old straw that has been thrashed ove.

and over again for years and years. If all I have said is nothing, if it is all idle and foolish, why do they take up the time of their fellow-men replying to me? Why do they fill their religious papers with criticisms, if all I have said and done reminds them, according to the Rev. Mr. Guard, of "some little dog barking at a railway train"? Why stop the train, why send for the directors, why hold a consultation and finally say, we must settle with that dog or stop running these cars?

Probably the best way to answer them all, is to prove beyond cavil the truth of what I have said.

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH MAN TO ENSLAVE HIS BROTHER?

II.

IF this "sacred" book teaches man to enslave his brother, it is not inspired. A god who would establish slavery is as cruel and heartless as any devil could be.

"Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land, and they shall be your possession.

"And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession. They shall be your bondmen forever.

"Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, *shall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids."—*Leviticus xxv.*

This is white slavery. This allows one white man to buy another, to buy a woman, to separate families and rob a mother of her child. This makes

the whip upon the naked backs of men and women a legal tender for labor performed. This is the kind of slavery established by the most merciful God. The reason given for all this, is, that the persons whom they enslaved were heathen. You may enslave them because they are not orthodox. If you can find anybody who does not believe in me, the God of the Jews, you may steal his wife from his arms, and her babe from the cradle. If you can find a woman that does not believe in the Hebrew Jehovah, you may steal her prattling child from her breast. Can any one conceive of anything more infamous? Can any one find in the literature of this world more frightful words ascribed even to a demon? And all this is found in that most beautiful and poetic chapter known as the 25th of Leviticus—from the Bible—from this sacred gift of God—this "Magna Charta of human freedom."

2. "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

3. "If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him.

4. "If his master have given him a wife, and she hath borne him sons or daughters; the wife and her

children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.

5. "And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and children; I will not go out free:

6. "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges: he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever."—*Exodus, xxi.*

The slave is allowed to have his liberty if he will give up his wife and children. He must remain in slavery for the sake of wife and child. This is another of the laws of the most merciful God. This God changes even love into a chain. Children are used by him as manacles and fetters, and wives become the keepers of prisons. Any man who believes that such hideous laws were made by an infinitely wise and benevolent God is, in my judgment, insane or totally depraved.

These are the doctrines of the Old Testament. What is the doctrine of the New? What message had he who came from heaven's throne for the oppressed of earth? What words of sympathy, what words of cheer, for those who labored and toiled without reward? Let us see:

"Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."—*Ephesians, vi.*

This is the salutation of the most merciful God to a slave, to a woman who has been robbed of her child—to a man tracked by hounds through lonely swamps—to a girl with flesh torn and bleeding—to a mother weeping above an empty cradle.

"Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."—*1 Peter ii., 18.*

"For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully."—*1 Peter ii., 19.*

It certainly must be an immense pleasure to God to see a man work patiently for nothing. It must please the Most High to see a slave with his wife and child sold upon the auction block. If this slave escapes from slavery and is pursued, how musical the baying of the bloodhound must be to the ears of this most merciful God. All this is simply infamous. On the throne of this universe there sits no such monster.

"Servants, obey in all things *your* masters, according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men

pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God." —*Col. iii., 22.*

The apostle here seems afraid that the slave would not work every moment that his strength permitted. He really seems to have feared that he might not at all times do the very best he could to promote the interests of the thief who claimed to own him. And speaking to all slaves, in the name of the Father of All, this apostle says: "Obey in all things your masters, not with eye-service, but with singleness of heart, fearing God." He says to them in substance, There is no way you can so well please God as to work honestly for a thief.

1. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed."

Think of serving God by honoring a robber! Think of bringing the name and doctrine of God into universal contempt by claiming to own yourself!

2. "And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort."

That is to say, do not despise Christians who steal the labor of others. Do not hold in contempt the "faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit," who turn the cross of Christ into a whipping post.

3. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words *even* to words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4. "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5. "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

This seems to be the opinion the apostles entertained of the early abolitionists. Seeking to give human beings their rights, seeking to give labor its just reward, seeking to clothe all men with that divine garment of the soul, Liberty,—all this was denounced by the apostle as a simple strife of words, whereof cometh envy, railings, evil surmisings and perverse disputing, destitute of truth.

6. "But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8. "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."—*1 Tim., vi.*

This was intended to make a slave satisfied to hear the clanking of his chains. This is the reason he should never try to better his condition. He should be contented simply with the right to work for nothing. If he only had food and raiment, and a thief to work for, he should be contented. He should solace himself with the apostolic reflection, that as he brought nothing into the world, he could carry nothing out, and that when dead he would be as happily situated as his master.

In order to show you what the inspired writer meant by the word *servant*, I will read from the 21st chapter of Exodus, verses 20 and 21 :

"And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand ; he shall be surely punished.

"Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished : for he *is* his money."

Yet, notwithstanding these passages the *Christian Advocate* says, "the Bible is the Magna Charta of our liberty."

After reading that, I was not surprised by the following in the same paper :

"We regret to record that Ingersoll is on a low

plane of infidelity and atheism, not less offensive to good morals than have been the teachings of infidelity during the last century. France has been cursed with such teachings for a hundred years, and because of it, to-day her citizens are incapable of self-government."

What was the condition of France a century ago? Were they capable of self-government then? For fourteen hundred years the common people of France had suffered. For fourteen hundred years they had been robbed by the altar and by the throne. They had been the prey of priests and nobles. All were exempt from taxation, except the common people. The cup of their suffering was full, and the French people arose in fury and frenzy, and tore the drapery from the altars of God, and filled the air with the dust of thrones.

Surely, the slavery of fourteen centuries had not been produced by the teachings of Voltaire. I stood only a little while ago at the place where once stood the Bastile. In my imagination I saw that prison standing as it stood of yore. I could see it attacked by the populace. I could see their stormy faces and hear their cries. And I saw that ancient fortification of tyranny go down forever. And now where once stood the Bastile stands the Column of July. Upon

its summit is a magnificent statue of Liberty, holding in one hand a banner, in the other a broken chain, and upon its shining forehead is the star of progress. There it stands where once stood the Bastile. And France is as much superior to what it was when Voltaire was born, as that statue, surmounting the Column of July, is more beautiful than the Bastile that stood there once with its cells of darkness, and its dungeons of horror.

And yet we are now told that the French people have rendered themselves incapable of government, simply because they have listened to the voice of progress. There are magnificent men in France. From that country have come to the human race some of the grandest and holiest messages the ear of man has ever heard. The French people have given to history some of the most touching acts of self-sacrifice ever performed beneath the amazed stars.

For my part, I admire the French people. I cannot forget the Rue San Antoine, nor the red cap of liberty. I can never cease to remember that the tricolor was held aloft in Paris, while Europe was in chains, and while liberty, with a bleeding breast, was in the Inquisition of Spain. And yet we are now told by a religious paper, that France is not capable of self-government. I suppose it was capable of

self-government under the old régime, at the time of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. I suppose it was capable of self-government when women were seen yoked with cattle pulling plows. I suppose it was capable of self-government when all who labored were in a condition of slavery.

In the old times, even among the priests, there were some good, some sincere and most excellent men. I have read somewhere of a sermon preached by one of these in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. This old priest, among other things, said that the soul of a beggar was as dear to God as the soul of the richest of his people, and that Jesus Christ died as much for a beggar as for a prince. One French peasant, rough with labor, cried out: "I propose three cheers for Jesus Christ." I like such things. I like to hear of them. I like to repeat them. Paris has been a kind of volcano, and has made the heavens lurid with its lava of hatred, but it has also contributed more than any other city to the intellectual development of man. France has produced some infamous men, among others John Calvin, but for one Calvin, she has produced a thousand benefactors of the human race.

The moment the French people rise above the superstitions of the church, they will be in the

highest sense capable of self-government. The moment France succeeds in releasing herself from the coils of Catholicism—from the shadows of superstition—from the foolish forms and mummeries of the church—from the intellectual tyranny of a thousand years—she will not only be capable of self-government, but will govern herself. Let the priests be usefully employed. We want no overseers of the mind; no slave-drivers for the soul. We cannot afford to pay hypocrites for depriving us of liberty. It is a waste of money to pay priests to frighten our children, and paralyze the intellect of women.

WAS THE WORLD CREATED IN SIX DAYS?

III.

FOR hundreds of years it was contended by all Christians that the earth was made in six days, literal days of twenty-four hours each, and that on the seventh day the Lord rested from his labor. Geologists have driven the church from this position, and it is now claimed that the days mentioned in the Bible are periods of time. This is a simple evasion, not in any way supported by the Scriptures. The Bible distinctly and clearly says that the world was created in six days. There is not within its lids a clearer statement. It does not say six periods. It was made according to that book in six days:

31. "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."—*Genesis i.*

1. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2. "And on the seventh day God ended his work

which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3. "And God blessed the seventh day (not seventh period), and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."—*Genesis ii.*

From the following passages it seems clear what was meant by the word days:

15. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death."—Served him right!

16. "Wherefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath, throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

17. "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was *refreshed.*

18. "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."—*Exodus xxxi.*

12. "Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13. "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven; and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

14. "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."—*Josh. x.*

These passages must certainly convey the idea that this world was made in six days, not six periods. And the reason why they were to keep the Sabbath was because the Creator rested on the seventh day —not period. If you say six periods, instead of six days, what becomes of your Sabbath? The only reason given in the Bible for observing the Sabbath is that God observed it—that he rested from his work that day and was refreshed. Take this reason away and the sacredness of that day has no foundation in the Scriptures.

WHAT IS THE ASTRONOMY OF THE BIBLE?

IV.

WHEN people were ignorant of all the sciences the Bible was understood by those who read it the same as by those who wrote it. From time to time discoveries were made that seemed inconsistent with the Scriptures. At first, theologians denounced the discoverers of all facts inconsistent with the Bible, as atheists and scoffers.

The Bible teaches us that the earth is the centre of the universe; that the sun and moon and stars revolve around this speck called the earth. The men who discovered that all this was a mistake were denounced by the ignorant clergy of that day, precisely as the ignorant clergy of our time denounce the advocates of free thought. When the doctrine of the earth's place in the solar system was demonstrated; when persecution could no longer conceal the mighty truth, then it was that the church made an effort to harmonize the Scriptures with the

discoveries of science. When the utter absurdity of the Mosaic account of creation became apparent to all thoughtful men, the church changed the reading of the Bible. Then it was pretended that the "days" of creation were vast periods of time. When it was shown to be utterly impossible that the sun revolved around the earth, then the account given by Joshua of the sun standing still for the space of a whole day, was changed into a figure of speech. It was said that Joshua merely conformed to the mode of speech common in his day; and that when he said the sun stood still, he merely intended to convey the idea that the earth ceased turning upon its axis. They admitted that stopping the sun could not lengthen the day, and for that reason it must have been the earth that stopped. But you will remember that the moon stood still in the valley of Ajalon—that the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.

One would naturally suppose that the sun would have given sufficient light to enable the Jews to avenge themselves upon their enemies without any assistance from the moon. Of course, if the moon had not stopped, the relations between the earth and moon would have been changed.

Is there a sensible man in the world who believes

this wretched piece of ignorance? Is it possible that the religion of this nineteenth century has for its basis such childish absurdities? According to this account, what was the sun, or rather the earth, stopped for? It was stopped in order that the Hebrews might avenge themselves upon the Amorites. For the accomplishment of such a purpose the earth was made to pause. Why should an almost infinite force be expended simply for the purpose of destroying a handful of men? Why this waste of force? Let me explain. I strike my hands together. They feel a sudden heat. Where did the heat come from? Motion has been changed into heat. You will remember that there can be no destruction of force. It disappears in one form only to reappear in another. The earth, rotating at the rate of one thousand miles an hour, was stopped. The motion of this vast globe would have instantly been changed into heat. It has been calculated by one of the greatest scientists of the present day that to stop the earth would generate as much heat as could be produced by burning a world as large as this of solid coal. And yet, all this force was expended for the paltry purpose of defeating a few poor barbarians. The employment of so much force for the accomplishment of so insignificant an object would be as

useless as bringing all the intellect of a great man to bear in answering the arguments of the clergymen of San Francisco.

The waste of that immense force in stopping the planets in their grand courses, for the purpose claimed, would be like using a Krupp gun to destroy an insect to which a single drop of water is "an unbounded world." How is it possible for men of ordinary intellect, not only to endorse such ignorant falsehoods, but to malign those who do not? Can anything be more debasing to the intellect of man than a belief in the astronomy of the Bible? According to the Scriptures, the world was made out of nothing, and the sun, moon, and stars, of the nothing that happened to be left. To the writers of the Bible the firmament was solid, and in it were grooves along which the stars were pushed by angels. From the Bible Cosmas constructed his geography and astronomy. His book was passed upon by the church, and was declared to be the truth concerning the subjects upon which he treated.

This eminent geologist and astronomer, taking the Bible as his guide, found and taught: First, that the earth was flat; second, that it was a vast parallelogram; third, that in the middle there was a vast body of land, then a strip of water all around

it, then a strip of land. He thought that on the outer strip of land people lived before the flood—that at the time of the flood, Noah in his Ark crossed the strip of water and landed on the shore of the country, in the middle of the world, where we now are. This great biblical scholar informed the true believers of his day that in the outer strip of land were mountains, around which the sun and moon revolved; that when the sun was on the side of the mountain next the land occupied by man, it was day, and when on the other side, it was night.

Mr. Cosmas believed the Bible, and regarded Joshua as the most eminent astronomer of his day. He also taught that the firmament was solid, and that the angels pushed and drew the stars. He tells us that these angels attended strictly to their business, that each one watched the motions of all the others so that proper distances might always be maintained, and all confusion avoided. All this was believed by the gentlemen who made most of our religion. The great argument made by Cosmas to show that the earth must be flat, was the fact that the Bible stated that when Christ should come the second time, in glory, the whole world should see him. "Now," said Cosmas, "if the world is round,

how could the people on the other side see the Lord when he comes?" This settled the question.

These were the ideas of the fathers of the church. These men have been for centuries regarded as almost divinely inspired. Long after they had become dust they governed the world. The superstitions they planted, their descendants watered with the best and bravest blood. To maintain their ignorant theories, the brain of the world was dwarfed for a thousand years, and the infamous work is still being prosecuted.

The Bible was regarded as not only true, but as the best of all truth. Any new theory advanced, was immediately examined in the light, or rather in the darkness, of revelation, and if according to that test it was false, it was denounced, and the person bringing it forward forced to recant. It would have been a far better course to have discovered every theory found to be in harmony with the Scriptures.

And yet we are told by the clergy and religious press of this city, that the Bible is the foundation of all science.

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH THE EXISTENCE OF THAT IMPOSSIBLE CRIME CALLED WITCHCRAFT?

V.

IT was said by Sir Thomas More that to give up witchcraft was to give up the Bible itself. This idea was entertained by nearly all the eminent theologians of a hundred years ago. In my judgment, they were right. To give up witchcraft is to give up, in a great degree at least, the supernatural. To throw away the little ghosts simply prepares the mind of man to give up the great ones. The founders of nearly all creeds, and of all religions properly so-called, have taught the existence of good and evil spirits. They have peopled the dark with devils and the light with angels. They have crowded hell with demons and heaven with seraphs. The moment these good and evil spirits, these angels and fiends, disappear from the imaginations of men, and phenomena are accounted for by natural rather than by supernatural means, a great step has been

taken in the direction of what is now known as materialism. While the church believes in witchcraft, it is in a greatly modified form. The evil spirits are not as plenty as in former times, and more phenomena are accounted for by natural means. Just to the extent that belief has been lost in spirits, just to that extent the church has lost its power and authority. When men ceased to account for the happening of any event by ascribing it to the direct action of good or evil spirits, and began to reason from known premises, the chains of superstition began to grow weak. Into such disrepute has witchcraft at last fallen that many Christians not only deny the existence of these evil spirits, but take the ground that no such thing is taught in the Scriptures. Let us see:

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."—*Exodus xxii., 18.*

7. "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a spirit at Endor.

8. "And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night; and he

said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9. "And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land; wherefore, then, layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10. "And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11. "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12. "And when the woman saw Samuel she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

13. "And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

14. "And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

15 ¶. "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?"—*2 Samuel, xxviii.*

This reads very much like an account of a modern spiritual seance. Is it not one of the wonderful things of the world that men and women who believe this account of the witch of Endor, who believe all the miracles and all the ghost stories of the Bible, deny with all their force the truth of modern Spiritualism. So far as I am concerned, I would rather believe some one who has heard what he relates, who has seen what he tells, or at least thinks he has seen what he tells. I would rather believe somebody I know, whose reputation for truth is good among those who know him. I would rather believe these people than to take the words of those who have been in their graves for four thousand years, and about whom I know nothing.

31 ¶. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord, your God."—*Leviticus xix.*

6 ¶. "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people."—*Leviticus xx.*

10. "There shall not be found among you any

one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

11. "Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12. "For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord."—*Deut. xviii.*

I have given you a few of the passages found in the Old Testament upon this subject, showing conclusively that the Bible teaches the existence of witches, wizards and those who have familiar spirits. In the New Testament there are passages equally strong, showing that the Savior himself was a believer in the existence of evil spirits, and in the existence of a personal devil. Nothing can be plainer than the teaching of the following:

1. "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

3. "And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4. "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5. "Then the devil taketh him up into the

holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.

6. "And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7. "Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God.

8. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9. "And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10. "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11. "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."—*Matt. iv.*

If this does not teach the existence of a personal devil, there is nothing within the lids of the Scriptures teaching the existence of a personal God. If this does not teach the existence of evil spirits, there is nothing in the Bible going to show that good spirits exist either in this world or the next.

16 ¶. "When the even was come they brought

unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick."—*Matt. vii.*

1. "And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2. "And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3. "Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4. "Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

5. "And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.

6. "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7. "And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8. "For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

9. "And he asked him, What is thy name? And

he answered, saying, My name is Legion, for we are many.

11. "Now, there was nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12. "And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13. "And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and they were about two thousand; and were choked in the sea."—*Mark v.*

The doctrine of witchcraft does not stop here. The power of casting out devils was bequeathed by the Savior to his apostles and followers, and to all who might believe in him throughout all the coming time:

17. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18. "And they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."—*Mark xvi.*

I would like to see the clergy who have been answering me, tested in this way: Let them drink poison, let them take up serpents, let them cure the

sick by the laying on of hands, and I will then believe that they believe.

I deny the witchcraft stories of the world. Witches are born in the ignorant, frightened minds of men. Reason will exorcise them. "They are tales told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." These devils have covered the world with blood and tears. They have filled the earth with fear. They have filled the lives of children with darkness and horror. They have peopled the sweet world of imagination with monsters. They have made religion a strange mingling of fear and ferocity. I am doing what I can to reave the heavens of these monsters. For my part, I laugh at them all. I hold them all in contempt, ancient and modern, great and small.

THE BIBLE IDEA OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN.

VI.

ALL religion has for its basis the tyranny of God and the slavery of man.

18. ¶ "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them,

19. "Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place.

20. "And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard.

21. "And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear."—*Deut. xxi.*

Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac

as a sacrifice. He proceeded to obey. And the boy, being then about thirty years of age, was not consulted. At the command of a phantom of the air, a man was willing to offer upon the altar his only son. And such was the slavery of children, that the only son had not the spirit to resist.

Have you ever read the story of Jephthah?

30 "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

31. "Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

32. ¶ "So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands.

33. "And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34. ¶ "And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was

his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.

35. "And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. . . .

39. "And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed."—*Judges xi.*

Is there in the history of the world a sadder thing than this? What can we think of a father who would sacrifice his daughter to a demon God? And what can we think of a God who would accept such a sacrifice? Can such a God be worthy of the worship of man? I plead for the rights of children. I plead for the government of kindness and love. I plead for the republic of home, the democracy of the fireside. I plead for affection. And for this I am pursued by invective. For this I am called a fiend, a devil, a monster, by Christian editors and clergymen, by those who pretend to love their enemies and pray for those that despitefully use them.

Allow me to give you another instance of affec-

tion related in the Scriptures. There was, it seems, a most excellent man by the name of Job. The Lord was walking up and down, and happening to meet Satan, said to him: "Are you acquainted with my servant Job? Have you noticed what an excellent man he is?" And Satan replied to him and said: "Why should he not be an excellent man—you have given him everything he wants? Take from him what he has and he will curse you." And thereupon the Lord gave Satan the power to destroy the property and children of Job. In a little while these high contracting parties met again; and the Lord seemed somewhat elated with his success, and called again the attention of Satan to the sinlessness of Job. Satan then told him to touch his body and he would curse him. And thereupon power was given to Satan over the body of Job, and he covered his body with boils. Yet in all this, Job did not sin with his lips.

This book seems to have been written to show the excellence of patience, and to prove that at last God will reward all who will bear the afflictions of heaven with fortitude and without complaint. The sons and daughters of Job had been slain, and then the Lord, in order to reward Job, gave him other children, other sons and other daughters—not the

same ones he had lost; but others. And this, according to the writer, made ample amends. Is that the idea we now have of love? If I have a child, no matter how deformed that child may be, and if it dies, nobody can make the loss to me good by bringing a more beautiful child. I want the one I loved and the one I lost.

THE GALLANTRY OF GOD.

VII.

I HAVE said that the Bible is a barbarous book; that it has no respect for the rights of woman. Now I propose to prove it. It takes something besides epithets and invectives to prove or disprove anything. Let us see what the sacred volume says concerning the mothers and daughters of the human race.

A man who does not in his heart of hearts respect woman, who has not there an altar at which he worships the memory of mother, is less than a man.

11. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12. "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

The reason given for this, and the only reason that occurred to the sacred writer, was:

13. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15. "Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."—*1 Tim. ii.*

3. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

That is to say, the woman sustains the same relation to the man that man does to Christ, and man sustains the same relation to Christ that Christ does to God.

This places the woman infinitely below the man. And yet this barbarous idiocy is regarded as divinely inspired. How can any woman look other than with contempt upon such passages? How can any woman believe that this is the will of a most merciful God?

7. "For a man, indeed, ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man."

And this is justified from the remarkable fact set forth in the next verse:

8. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man."

This same chivalric gentleman also says:

9. "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."—*1 Cor. xi.*

22. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."

Is it possible for abject obedience to go beyond this?

23. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and he is the saviour of the body.

24. "Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."—*Eph. v.*

Even the Savior did not put man and woman upon an equality. A man could divorce his wife, but the wife could not divorce her husband.

Every noble woman should hold such apostles and such ideas in contempt. According to the Old Testament, woman had to ask pardon and had to be purified from the crime of having born sons and daughters. To make love and maternity crimes is infamous.

10. "When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive,

11. "And seest among the captives a beautiful

woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife,

12. "Then thou shalt bring her home to thy house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails."—*Deut. xxi.*

This is barbarism, no matter whether it came from heaven or from hell, from a God or from a devil, from the golden streets of the New Jerusalem or from the very Sodom of perdition. It is barbarism complete and utter.

DOES THE BIBLE SANCTION POLYGAMY AND CONCUBINAGE?

VIII.

READ the infamous order of Moses in the 31st chapter of Numbers—an order unfit to be reproduced in print—an order which I am unwilling to repeat. Read the 31st chapter of Exodus. Read the 21st chapter of Deuteronomy. Read the life of Abraham, of David, of Solomon, of Jacob, and then tell me the sacred Bible does not teach polygamy and concubinage. All the languages of the world are insufficient to express the filth of polygamy. It makes man a beast—woman a slave. It destroys the fireside. It makes virtue an outcast. It makes home a lair of wild beasts. It is the infamy of infamies. Yet this is the doctrine of the Bible—a doctrine defended even by Luther and Melancthon. It is by the Bible that Brigham Young justifies the practice of this beastly horror. It takes from language those sweetest words, husband, wife, father,

mother, child and lover. It takes us back to the barbarism of animals, and leaves the heart a den in which crawl and hiss the slimy serpents of loathsome lust. Yet the book justifying this infamy is the book upon which rests the civilization of the nineteenth century. And because I denounce this frightful thing, the clergy denounce me as a demon, and the infamous *Christian Advocate* says that the moral sentiment of this State ought to denounce this Illinois Catiline for his blasphemous utterances and for his base and debasing scurrility.

DOES THE BIBLE UPHOLD AND JUSTIFY POLITICAL TYRANNY?

IX.

FOR my part, I insist that man has not only the capacity, but the right to govern himself. All political authority is vested in the people themselves. They have the right to select their officers and agents, and these officers and agents are responsible to the people. Political authority does not come from the clouds. Man should not be governed by the aristocracy of the air. The Bible is not a Republican or Democratic book. Exactly the opposite doctrine is taught. From that volume we learn that the people have no power whatever; that all power and political authority comes from on high, and that all the kings, all the potentates and powers, have been ordained of God; that all the ignorant and cruel kings have been placed upon the world's thrones by the direct act of Deity. The Scriptures teach us that the common people have but one duty

—the duty of obedience. Let me read to you some of the political ideas in the great "Magna Charta" of human liberty.

1. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.

2. "Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

According to this, George III. was ordained of God. He was King of Great Britian by divine right, and by divine right was the lawful King of the American Colonies. The leaders in the Revolutionary struggle resisted the power, and according to these passages, resisted the ordinances of God; and for that resistance they are promised the eternal recompense of damnation.

3. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. . . .

5. "Wherefore, *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6. "For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."—*Romans, xiii.*

13. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme;

14. "Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15. "For so is the will of God."—*1 Pet. ii.*

Had these ideas been carried out, political progress in the world would have been impossible. Upon the necks of the people still would have been the feet of kings. I deny this wretched, this infamous doctrine. Whether higher powers are ordained of God or not, if those higher powers endeavor to destroy the rights of man, I for one shall resist. Whenever and wherever the sword of rebellion is drawn in support of a human right, I am a rebel. The despicable doctrine of submission to titled wrong and robed injustice finds no lodgment in the brain of a man. The real rulers are the people, and the rulers so-called are but the servants of the people. They are not ordained of any God. All political power comes from and belongs to man. Upon these texts of Scripture rest the thrones of Europe. For fifteen hundred years these verses have been repeated by brainless kings and heartless priests. For fifteen hundred years each one of

these texts has been a bastile in which has been imprisoned the pioneers of progress. Each one of these texts has been an obstruction on the highway of humanity. Each one has been a fortification behind which have crouched the sainted hypocrites and the titled robbers. According to these texts, a robber gets his right to rob from God. And it is the duty of the robbed to submit. The thief gets his right to steal from God. The king gets his right to trample upon human liberty from God. I say, fight the king—fight the priest.

THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OF GOD.

X.

THE Bible denounces religious liberty. After covering the world with blood, after having made it almost hollow with graves, Christians are beginning to say that men have a right to differ upon religious questions provided the questions about which they differ are not considered of great importance. The motto of the Evangelical Alliance is:

"In non-essentials, Liberty; in essentials, Unity."

The Christian world have condescended to say that upon all non-essential points we shall have the right to think for ourselves; but upon matters of the least importance, they will think and speak for us. In this they are consistent. They but follow the teachings of the God they worship. They but adhere to the precepts and commands of the sacred Scriptures. Within that volume there is no such thing as religous toleration. Within that volume there is not one particle of mercy for an unbeliever. For all who

think for themselves, for all who are the owners of their own souls, there are threatenings, curses and anathemas. Any Christian who to-day exercises the least toleration is to that extent false to his religion. Let us see what the "Magna Charta" of liberty says upon this subject:

6. ¶ "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

7. "Namely of the gods of the people which *are* round about you, nigh unto thee, or afar off from thee, from the *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth;

8. "Thou shalt not consent unto him; nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him; neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him.

9. "But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people;

10. "And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."—*Deut. xiii.*

That is the religious liberty of the Bible. If the wife of your bosom had said, "I like the religion of India better than the religion of Palestine," it was then your duty to kill her, and the merciful Most High—understand me, I do not believe in any merciful Most High—said:

"Thou shalt not pity her but thou shalt surely kill; thy hand shall be the first upon her to put her to death."

This I denounce as infamously infamous. If it is necessary to believe in such a God, if it is necessary to adore such a Deity in order to be saved, I will take my part joyfully in perdition. Let me read you a few more extracts from the "Magna Charta" of human liberty;

2. ¶ "If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant,

3. "And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;

4. "And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel;

5. "Then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones till they die."

Under this law if the woman you loved had said: "Let us worship the sun; I am tired of this jealous and bloodthirsty Jehovah; let us worship the sun; let us kneel to it as it rises over the hills, filling the world with light and love, when the dawn stands jocund on the mountain's misty top; it is the sun whose beams illumine and cover the earth with verdure and with beauty; it is the sun that covers the trees with leaves, that carpets the earth with grass and adorns the world with flowers; I adore the sun because in its light I have seen your eyes; it has given to me the face of my babe; it has clothed my life with joy; let us in gratitude fall down and worship the glorious beams of the sun."

For this offence she deserved not only death, but death at your hands:

"Thine eye shall not pity her; neither shalt thou spare; neither shalt thou conceal her.

"But thou shalt surely kill her: thy hand shall be the first upon her to put her to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

"And thou shalt stone her with stones that she die."

For my part I had a thousand times rather worship the sun than a God who would make such a law or give such a command. This you may say is the doctrine of the Old Testament—what is the doctrine of the New?

"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."

That is the religious liberty of the New Testament. That is the "tidings of great joy."

Every one of these words has been a chain upon the limbs, a whip upon the backs of men. Every one has been a fagot. Every one has been a sword. Every one has been a dungeon, a scaffold, a rack. Every one has been a fountain of tears. These words have filled the hearts of men with hatred. These words invented all the instruments of torture. These words covered the earth with blood.

For the sake of argument, suppose that the Bible is an inspired book. If then, as is contended, God gave these frightful laws commanding religious intolerance to his chosen people, and afterward this same God took upon himself flesh, and came among the Jews and taught a different religion, and they crucified him, did he not reap what he had sown?

DOES THE BIBLE DESCRIBE A GOD OF MERCY?

XI.

IS it possible to conceive of a more jealous, revengeful, changeable, unjust, unreasonable, cruel being than the Jehovah of the Hebrews? Is it possible to read the words said to have been spoken by this Deity, without a shudder? Is it possible to contemplate his character without hatred?

"I will make mine arrows drunk with blood and my sword shall devour flesh."—*Deut. xxxii.*

Is this the language of an infinitely kind and tender parent to his weak, his wandering and suffering children?

"Thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same." *Psalms, lxviii.*

Is it possible that a God takes delight in seeing dogs lap the blood of his children?

22. "And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little; thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.

23. "But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

24. "And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven; there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them."—*Deut. vii.*

If these words had proceeded from the mouth of a demon, if they had been spoken by some enraged and infinitely malicious fiend, I should not have been surprised. But these things are attributed to a God of infinite mercy.

40. ¶ "So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded."—*Josh. x.*

14. "And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe."—*Josh. xi.*

19. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all other they took in battle.

20. "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses."—*Josh. xi.*

There are no words in our language with which to express the indignation I feel when reading these cruel and heartless words.

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the sword. But the women, *and the little ones*, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

"Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an

inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth."

These terrible instructions were given to an army of invasion. The men who were thus ruthlessly murdered were fighting for their homes, their firesides, for their wives and for their little children. Yet these things, by the clergy of San Francisco, are called acts of sublime mercy.

All this is justified by the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The Old Testament is filled with anathemas, with curses, with words of vengeance, of revenge, of jealousy, of hatred and of almost infinite brutality. Do not, I pray you, pluck from the heart the sweet flower of pity and trample it in the bloody dust of superstition. Do not, I beseech you, justify the murder of women, the assassination of dimpled babes. Do not let the gaze of the gorgon of superstition turn your hearts to stone.

Is there an intelligent Christian in the world who would not with joy and gladness receive conclusive testimony to the effect that all the passages in the Bible upholding and sustaining polygamy and concubinage, political tyranny, the subjection of woman, the enslavement of children, establishing domestic and political tyranny, and that all the commands to destroy men, women and children, are but interpola-

tions of kings and priests, made for the purpose of subjugating mankind through the instrumentality of fear? Is there a Christian in the world who would not think vastly more of the Bible if all these infamous things were eliminated from it?

Surely the good things in that book are not rendered more sacred from the fact that in the same volume are found the frightful passages I have quoted. In my judgment the Bible should be read and studied precisely as we read and study any book whatever. The good in it should be preserved and cherished, and that which shocks the human heart should be cast aside forever.

While the Old Testament threatens men, women and children with disease, famine, war, pestilence and death, there are no threatenings of punishment beyond this life. The doctrine of eternal punishment is a dogma of the New Testament. This doctrine, the most cruel, the most infamous of which the human mind can conceive, is taught, if taught at all, in the Bible—in the New Testament. One cannot imagine what the human heart has suffered by reason of the frightful doctrine of eternal damnation. It is a doctrine so abhorrent to every drop of my blood, so infinitely cruel, that it is impossible for me to respect either the head or heart of any human

being who teaches or fears it. This doctrine necessarily subverts all ideas of justice. To inflict infinite punishment for finite crimes, or rather for crimes committed by finite beings, is a proposition so monstrous that I am astonished it ever found lodgment in the brain of man. Whoever says that we can be happy in heaven while those we loved on earth are suffering infinite torments in eternal fire, defames and calumniates the human heart.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION.

XII.

WE are told, however, that a way has been provided for the salvation of all men, and that in this plan the infinite mercy of God is made manifest to the children of men. According to the great scheme of the atonement, the innocent suffers for the guilty in order to satisfy a law. What kind of law must it be that is satisfied with the agony of innocence? Who made this law? If God made it he must have known that the innocent would have to suffer as a consequence. The whole scheme is to me a medley of contradictions, impossibilities and theological conclusions. We are told that if Adam and Eve had not sinned in the Garden of Eden death never would have entered the world. We are further informed that had it not been for the devil, Adam and Eve would not have been led astray; and if they had not, as I said before, death never would have touched with its icy hand the

human heart. If our first parents had never sinned, and death never had entered the world, you and I never would have existed. The earth would have been filled thousands of generations before you and I were born. At the feast of life, death made seats vacant for us. According to this doctrine, we are indebted to the devil for our existence. Had he not tempted Eve—no sin. If there had been no sin—no death. If there had been no death the world would have been filled ages before you and I were born. Therefore, we owe our existence to the devil. We are further informed that as a consequence of original sin the scheme called the atonement became necessary; and that if the Savior had not taken upon himself flesh and come to this atom called the earth, and if he had not been crucified for us, we should all have been cast forever into hell. Had it not been for the bigotry of the Jews and the treachery of Judas Iscariot, Christ would not have been crucified; and if he had not been crucified, all of us would have had our portion in the lake that burneth with eternal fire.

According to this great doctrine, according to this vast and most wonderful scheme, we owe, as I said before, our existence to the devil, our salvation to Judas Iscariot and the bigotry of the Jews.

endeavors to prevent this natural growth or development. What has happened to other religions must happen to ours. Ours is not superior to many that have passed, or are passing away. Other religions have been lived for and died for by men as noble as ours can boast. Their dogmas and doctrines have, to say the least, been as reasonable, as full of spiritual grandeur, as ours.

Man has had beautiful thoughts. Man has tried to solve these questions in all the countries of the world, and I respect all such men and women; but let me tell you one little thing. I want to show you that in other countries there is something.

The Parsee sect of Persia say: A Persian saint ascended the three stairs that lead to heaven's gate, and knocked; a voice said: "Who is there?" "Thy servant, O God!" But the gates would not open. For seven years he did every act of kindness; again he came, and the voice said: "Who is there?" And he replied: "Thy slave, O God!" Yet the gates were shut. Yet seven other years of kindness, and the man again knocked; and the voice cried and said: "Who is there?" "Thyself, O God!" And the gates wide open flew.

I say there is no more beautiful Christian poem than this.

A Persian after having read our religion, with its frightful descriptions of perdition, wrote these words: "Two angels flying out from the blissful city of God —the angel of love and the angel of pity—hovered over the eternal pit where suffered the captives of hell. One smile of love illumined the darkness and one tear of pity extinguished all the fires." Has orthodoxy produced anything as generously beautiful as this? Let me read you this: Sectarians, hear this: Believers in eternal damnation, hear this: Clergy of America who expect to have your happiness in heaven increased by seeing me burning in hell, hear this:

This is the prayer of the Brahmins—a prayer that has trembled from human lips toward heaven for more than four thousand years:

"Never will I seek or receive private individual salvation. Never will I enter into final bliss alone. But forever and everywhere will I labor and strive for the final redemption of every creature throughout all worlds, and until all are redeemed. Never will I wrongly leave this world to sin, sorrow and struggle, but will remain and work and suffer where I am."

Has the orthodox religion produced a prayer like this? See the infinite charity, not only for every

soul in this world, but of all the shining worlds of the universe. Think of that, ye parsons who imagine that a large majority are going to eternal ruin.

Compare it with the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, and compare it with the imprecation of Christ: "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;" with the ideas of Jeremy Taylor, with the creeds of Christendom, with all the prayers of all the saints, and in no church except the Universalist will you hear a prayer like this.

"When thou art in doubt as to whether an action is good or bad, abstain from it."

Since the days of Zoroaster has there been any rule for human conduct given superior to this?

Are the principles taught by us superior to those of Confucius? He was asked if there was any single word comprising the duties of man. He replied: "Reciprocity." Upon being asked what he thought of the doctrine of returning benefits for injuries, he replied: "That is not my doctrine. If you return benefits for injuries what do you propose for benefits? My doctrine is: For benefits return benefits; for injuries return justice without any admixture of revenge."

To return good for evil is to pay a premium upon

wickedness. I cannot put a man under obligation to do me a favor by doing him an injury.

Now, to-day, right now, what is the church doing? What is it doing, I ask you honestly? Does it satisfy the craving hearts of the nineteenth century? Are we satisfied? I am not saying this except from the honesty of my heart. Are we satisfied? Is it a consolation to us now? Is it even a consolation when those we love die? The dead are so near and the promises are so far away. It is covered with the rubbish of the past. I ask you, is it all that is demanded by the brain and heart of the nineteenth century?

We want something better; we want something grander; we want something that has more brain in it, and more heart in it. We want to advance —that is what we want; and you cannot advance without being a heretic—you cannot do it.

Nearly all these religions have been upheld by persecution and bloodshed. They have been rendered stable by putting fetters upon the human brain. They have all, however, been perfectly natural productions, and under similar circumstances would all be reproduced. Only by intellectual development are the old superstitions outgrown. As only the few intellectually advance, the majority

is left on the side of superstition, and remains there until the advanced ideas of the few thinkers become general; and by that time there are other thinkers still in advance.

And so the work of development and growth slowly and painfully proceeds from age to age. The pioneers are denounced as heretics, and the heretics denounce their denouncers as the disciples of superstition and ignorance. Christ was a heretic. Herod was orthodox. Socrates was a blasphemer. Anytus worshiped all the gods. Luther was a skeptic, while the sellers of indulgences were the best of Catholics. Roger Williams was a heretic, while the Puritans who drove him from Massachusetts were all orthodox. Every step in advance in the religious history of the world has been taken by heretics. No superstition has been destroyed except by a heretic. No creed has been bettered except by a heretic. Heretic is the name that the orthodox laggard hurls at the disappearing pioneer. It is shouted by the dwellers in swamps to the people upon the hills. It is the opinion that midnight entertains of the dawn. It is what the rotting says of the growing. Heretic is the name that a stench gives to a perfume.

With this word the coffin salutes the cradle. It is taken from the lips of the dead. Orthodoxy is a

shroud—heresy is a banner. Orthodoxy is an epitaph—heresy is a prophecy. Orthodoxy is a cloud, a fog, a mist—heresy the star shining forever above the child of truth.

I am a believer in the eternity of progress. I do not believe that Want will forever extend its withered hand, its wan and shriveled palms, for charity. I do not believe that the children will forever be governed by cruelty and brute force. I do not believe that poverty will dwell with man forever. I do not believe that prisons will forever cover the earth, or that the shadow of the gallows will forever fall upon the ground. I do not believe that injustice will sit forever upon the bench, or that malice and superstition will forever stand in the pulpit.

I believe the time will come when there will be charity in every heart, when there will be love in every family, and when law and liberty and justice, like the atmosphere, will surround this world.

We have worshiped the ghosts long enough. We have prostrated ourselves before the ignorance of the past.

Let us stand erect and look with hopeful eyes toward the brightening future. Let us stand by our convictions. Let us not throw away our idea of

justice for the sake of any book or of any religion whatever. Let us live according to our highest and noblest and purest ideal.

By this time we should know that the real Bible has not been written.

The real Bible is not the work of inspired men, or prophets, or apostles, or evangelists, or of Christs.

Every man who finds a fact, adds, as it were, a word to this great book. It is not attested by prophecy, by miracles, or signs. It makes no appeal to faith, to ignorance, to credulity or fear. It has no punishment for unbelief, and no reward for hypocrisy. It appeals to man in the name of demonstration. It has nothing to conceal. It has no fear of being read, of being contradicted, of being investigated and understood. It does not pretend to be holy, or sacred; it simply claims to be true. It challenges the scrutiny of all, and implores every reader to verify every line for himself. It is incapable of being blasphemed. This book appeals to all the surroundings of man. Each thing that exists testifies to its perfection. The earth, with its heart of fire and crowns of snow; with its forests and plains, its rocks and seas; with its every wave and cloud; with its every leaf and bud and flower, con-

firms its every word, and the solemn stars, shining in the infinite abysses, are the eternal witnesses of its truth.

Ladies and gentlemen you cannot tell how I thank you this evening; you cannot tell how I feel toward the intellectual hospitality of this great city by the Pacific sea. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you—I thank you again and again, a thousand times.

MY CHICAGO BIBLE CLASS.

MY CHICAGO BIBLE CLASS.*

To the Editor :—

NOTHING is more gratifying than to see ideas that were received with scorn, flourishing in the sunshine of approval. Only a few weeks ago, I stated that the Bible was not inspired; that Moses was mistaken; that the "flood" was a foolish myth; that the Tower of Babel existed only in credulity; that God did not create the universe from nothing, that he did not start the first woman with a rib; that he never upheld slavery; that he was not a polygamist; that he did not kill people for making hair-oil; that he did not order his generals to kill the dimpled babes; that he did not allow the roses of love and the violets of modesty to be trodden under the brutal feet of lust; that the Hebrew language was written without vowels; that the Bible was composed of many books, written by unknown men; that all translations differed from each other; and that this book had filled the world with agony and crime.

At that time I had not the remotest idea that the

*Chicago Times, 1879.

most learned clergymen in Chicago would substantially agree with me—in public. I have read the replies of the Rev. Robert Collyer, Dr. Thomas, Rabbi Kohler, Rev. Brooke Herford, Prof. Swing and Dr. Ryder, and will now ask them a few questions, answering them in their own words.

First. Rev. Robert Collyer.

Question. What is your opinion of the Bible?

Answer. "It is a splendid book. It makes the noblest type of Catholics and the meanest bigots. Through this book men give their hearts for good to God, or for evil to the devil. The best argument for the intrinsic greatness of the book is that it can touch such wide extremes, and seem to maintain us in the most unparalleled cruelty, as well as the most tender mercy; that it can inspire purity like that of the great saints, and afford arguments in favor of polygamy. The Bible is the text book of ironclad Calvinism and sunny Universalism. It makes the Quaker quiet, and the Millerite crazy. It inspired the Union soldier to live and grandly die for the right, and Stonewall Jackson to live nobly, and die grandly for the wrong."

Question. But, Mr. Collyer, do you really think that a book with as many passages in favor of wrong as right, is inspired?

Answer. "I look upon the Old Testament as a rotting tree. When it falls it will fertilize a bank of violets."

Question. Do you believe that God upheld slavery and polygamy? Do you believe that he ordered the killing of babes and the violation of maidens?

Answer. "There is threefold inspiration in the Bible, the first, peerless and perfect, the word of God to man; *the second, simply and purely human, and then below this again, there is an inspiration born of an evil heart, ruthless and savage there and then as anything well can be.* A threefold inspiration, of heaven first, then of the earth, and then of hell, all in the same book, all sometimes in the same chapter, and then, besides, a great many things that need no inspiration."

Question. Then after all you do not pretend that the Scriptures are really inspired?

Answer. "The Scriptures make no such claim for themselves as the church makes for them. They leave me free to say this is false, or this is true. The truth even within the Bible, dies and lives, makes on this side and loses on that."

Question. What do you say to the last verse in the Bible, where a curse is threatened to any man who takes from or adds to the book?

Answer. "I have but one answer to this question, and it is: Let who will have written this, I cannot for an instant believe that it was written by a divine inspiration. Such dogmas and threats as these are not of God, but of man, and not of any man of a free spirit and heart eager for the truth, but a narrow man who would cripple and confine the human soul in its quest after the whole truth of God, and back those who have done the shameful things in the name of the most high."

Question. Do you not regard such talk as "slang"?

(*Supposed*) *Answer.* If an infidel had said that the writer of Revelation was narrow and bigoted, I might have denounced his discourse as "slang," but I think that Unitarian ministers can do so with the greatest propriety.

Question. Do you believe in the stories of the Bible, about Jael, and the sun standing still, and the walls falling at the blowing of horns?

Answer. "They may be legends, myths, poems, or what they will, but they are not the word of God. So I say again, it was not the God and Father of us all, who inspired the woman to drive that nail crashing through the king's temple after she had given him that bowl of milk and bid him sleep in safety, but a very mean devil of hatred and revenge,

that I should hardly expect to find in a squaw on the plains. It was not the ram's horns and the shouting before which the walls fell flat. If they went down at all, it was through good solid pounding. And not for an instant did the steady sun stand still or let his planet stand still while barbarian fought barbarian. He kept just the time then he keeps now. They might believe it who made the record. I do not. And since the whole Christian world might believe it, still we do not who gather in this church. A free and reasonable mind stands right in our way. Newton might believe it as a Christian, and disbelieve it as a philosopher. We stand then with the philosopher against the Christian, for we must believe what is true to us in the last test, and these things are not true."

Second. Rev. Dr. Thomas.

Question. What is your opinion of the Old Testament?

Answer. "My opinion is that it is not one book, but many—thirty-nine books bound up in one. The date and authorship of most of these books are wholly unknown. The Hebrews wrote without vowels, and without dividing the letters into syllables, words, or sentences. The books were gathered up by Ezra. At that time only two of the Jewish tribes

remained. All progress has ceased. In gathering up the sacred book, copyists exercised great liberty in making changes and additions."

Question. Yes, we know all that, but is the Old Testament inspired?

Answer. "There may be the inspiration of art, of poetry, or oratory; of patriotism—and there are such inspirations. There are moments when great truths and principles come to men. They seek the man, and not the man them."

Question. Yes, we all admit that, but is the Bible inspired?

Answer. "But still I know of no way to convince anyone of spirit, and inspiration, and God, only as his reason may take hold of these things."

Question. Do you think the Old Testament true?

Answer. "The story of Eden may be an allegory. The history of the children of Israel may have mistakes."

Question. Must inspiration claim infallibility?

Answer. "It is a mistake to say that if you believe one part of the Bible you must believe all. Some of the thirty-nine books may be inspired, others not; or there may be degrees of inspiration."

Question. Do you believe that God commanded

the soldiers to kill the children and the married women, and save for themselves, the maidens, as recorded in *Numbers xxxi, 2*?

Do you believe that God upheld slavery?

Do you believe that God upheld polygamy?

Answer. "The Bible may be wrong in some statements. God and right cannot be wrong. We must not exalt the Bible above God. It may be that we have claimed too much for the Bible, and thereby given not a little occasion for such men as Mr. Ingersoll to appear at the other extreme, denying too much."

Question. What then shall be done?

Answer. "We must take a middle ground. It is not necessary to believe that the bears devoured the forty-two children, nor that Jonah was swallowed by the whale."

Third. Rev. Dr. Kohler.

Question. What is your opinion about the Old Testament?

Answer. "I will not make futile attempts of artificially interpreting the letter of the Bible so as to make it reflect the philosophical, moral and scientific views of our time. The Bible is a sacred record of humanity's childhood."

Question. Are you an orthodox Christian?

Answer. "No. Orthodoxy, with its face turned backward to a ruined temple or a dead Messiah, is fast becoming like Lot's wife, a pillar of salt."

Question. Do you really believe the Old Testament was inspired?

Answer. "I greatly acknowledge our indebtedness to men like Voltaire and Thomas Paine, whose bold denial and cutting wit were so instrumental in bringing about this glorious era of freedom, so congenial and blissful, particularly to the long-abused Jewish race."

Question. Do you believe in the inspiration of the Bible?

Answer. "Of course there is a destructive axe needed to strike down the old building in order to make room for the grander new. The divine origin claimed by the Hebrews for their national literature, was claimed by all nations for their old records and laws as preserved by the priesthood. As Moses, the Hebrew law-giver, is represented as having received the law from God on the holy mountain, so is Zoroaster the Persian, Manu the Hindoo, Minos the Cretan, Lycurgus the Spartan, and Numa the Roman."

Question. Do you believe all the stories in the Bible?

Answer. "All that can and must be said against them is that they have been too long retained around the arms and limbs of grown-up manhood, to check the spiritual progress of religion; that by Jewish ritualism and Christian dogmatism they became fetters unto the soul, turning the light of heaven into a misty haze to blind the eye, and even into a hell-fire of fanaticism to consume souls."

Question. Is the Bible inspired?

Answer. "True, the Bible is not free from errors, nor is any work of man and time. It abounds in childish views and offensive matter. I trust that it will in a time not far off be presented for common use in families, schools, synagogues and churches, in a refined shape, cleansed from all dross and chaff, and stumbling blocks in which the scoffer delights to dwell."

Fourth. Rev. Mr. Herford.

Question. Is the Bible true?

Answer. "Ingersoll is very fond of saying 'The question is not, is the Bible inspired, but is it true?' That sounds very plausible, but you know as applied to *any ancient book* it is simply nonsense."

Question. Do you think the stories in the Bible exaggerated?

Answer. "I dare say the numbers are immensely exaggerated."

Question. Do you think that God upheld polygamy?

Answer. "The truth of which simply is, that four thousand years ago polygamy existed among the Jews, as everywhere else on earth then, and even their prophets did not come to the idea of its being wrong. *But what is there to be indignant* about in that?"

Question. And so you really wonder why any man should be indignant at the idea that God upheld and sanctioned that beastliness called polygamy?

Answer. "What is there to be indignant about in that?"

Fifth. Prof. Swing.

Question. What is your idea of the Bible?

Answer. "I think it is a poem."

Sixth. Rev. Dr. Ryder.

Question. And what is your idea of the sacred Scriptures?

Answer. "Like other nations, the Hebrews had their patriotic, descriptive, didactic and lyrical poems in the same varieties as other nations; but with them, unlike other nations, whatever may be the form

of their poetry, it always possesses the characteristic of religion."

Question. I suppose you fully appreciate the religious characteristics of the Song of Solomon.

No answer.

Question. Does the Bible uphold polygamy?

Answer. "The law of Moses did not forbid it, but contained many provisions against its worst abuses, and such as were intended to restrict it within narrow limits."

Question. So you think God corrected some of the worst abuses of polygamy, but preserved the institution itself?

I might question many others, but have concluded not to consider those as members of my Bible Class who deal in calumnies and epithets. From the so-called "replies" of such ministers, it appears that while Christianity changes the heart, it does not improve the manners, and that one can get into heaven in the next world without having been a gentleman in this.

It is difficult for me to express the deep and thrilling satisfaction I have experienced in reading the admissions of the clergy of Chicago. Surely, the battle of intellectual liberty is almost won, when ministers admit that the Bible is filled with ignorant

and cruel mistakes; that each man has the right to think for himself, and that it is not necessary to believe the Scriptures in order to be saved. From the bottom of my heart I congratulate my pupils on the advance they have made, and hope soon to meet them on the serene heights of perfect freedom.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Washington, D. C., May 7, 1879.

TO THE INDIANAPOLIS CLERGY.

TO THE INDIANAPOLIS CLERGY.*

THE following questions have been submitted to me by the Rev. David Walk, Dr. T. B. Taylor, the Rev. Myron W. Reed, and the Rev. D. O'Donaghue, of Indianapolis, with the request that I answer them :

I.

Question. Is the Character of Jesus of Nazareth, as described in the Four Gospels, Fictional or Real? —REV. DAVID WALK.

Answer. In all probability, there was a man by the name of Jesus Christ, who was,in his day and generation, a reformer—a man who was infinitely shocked at the religion of Jehovah—who became almost insane with pity as he contemplated the sufferings of the weak, the poor, and the ignorant at the hands of an intolerant, cruel, hypocritical, and bloodthirsty church. It is no wonder that such a man predicted the downfall of the temple. In all probability, he

* *The Iconoclast*, Indianapolis, Indiana. 1882.

hated, at last, every pillar and stone in it, and despised even the "Holy of Holies." This man, of course, like other men, grew. He did not die with the opinion he held in his youth. He changed his views from time to time—fanned the spark of reason into a flame, and as he grew older his horizon extended and widened, and he became gradually a wiser, greater, and better man.

I find two or three Christs described in the four Gospels. In some portions you would imagine that he was an exceedingly pious Jew. When he says that people must not swear by Jerusalem, because it is God's holy city, certainly no Pharisee could have gone beyond that expression. So, too, when it is recorded that he drove the money changers from the temple. This, had it happened, would have been the act simply of one who had respect for this temple and not for the religion taught in it.

It would seem that, at first, Christ believed substantially in the religion of his time; that afterward, seeing its faults, he wished to reform it; and finally, comprehending it in all its enormity, he devoted his life to its destruction. This view shows that he "increased in stature and grew in knowledge."

This view is also supported by the fact that, at

first, according to the account, Christ distinctly stated that his gospel was not for the Gentiles. At that time he had altogether more patriotism than philosophy. In my own opinion, he was driven to like the Gentiles by the persecution he endured at home. He found, as every Freethinker now finds, that there are many saints not in churches and many devils not out.

The character of Christ, in many particulars, as described in the Gospels, depends upon who wrote the Gospels. Each one endeavored to make a Christ to suit himself. So that Christ, after all, is a growth; and since the Gospels were finished, millions of men have been adding to and changing the character of Christ.

There is another thing that should not be forgotten, and that is that the Gospels were not written until after the Epistles. I take it for granted that Paul never saw any of the Gospels, for the reason that he quotes none of them. There is also this remarkable fact: Paul quotes none of the miracles of the New Testament. He says not one word about the multitude being fed miraculously, not one word about the resurrection of Lazarus, nor of the widow's son. He had never heard of the lame, the halt, and the blind that had been cured; or if he had, he did not

think these incidents of enough importance to be embalmed in an epistle.

So we find that none of the early fathers ever quoted from the four Gospels. Nothing can be more certain than that the four Gospels were not written until after the Epistles, and nothing can be more certain than that the early Christians knew nothing of what we call the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. All these things have been growths. At first it was believed that Christ was a direct descendant from David. At that time the disciples of Christ, of course, were Jews. The Messiah was expected through the blood of David.—For that reason, the genealogy of Joseph, a descendant of David, was given. It was not until long after, that the idea came into the minds of Christians that Christ was the son of the Holy Ghost. If they, at the time the genealogy was given, believed that Christ was in fact the son of the Holy Ghost, why did they give the genealogy of Joseph to show that Christ was related to David? In other words, why should the son of God attempt to get glory out of the fact that he had in his veins the blood of a barbarian king? There is only one answer to this. The Jews expected the Messiah through David, and in order to prove that Christ was the Messiah, they gave the

genealogy of Joseph. Afterward, the idea became popularized that Christ was the son of God, and then were interpolated the words "as was supposed" in the genealogy of Christ. It was a long time before the disciples became great enough to include the world in their scheme, and before they thought it proper to tell the "glad tidings of great joy" beyond the limits of Judea.

My own opinion is that the man called Christ lived; but whether he lived in Palestine, or not, is of no importance. His life is worth its example, its moral force, its benevolence, its self-denial and heroism. It is of no earthly importance whether he changed water into wine or not. All his miracles are simply dust and darkness compared with what he actually said and actually did. We should be kind to each other whether Lazarus was raised or not. We should be just and forgiving whether Christ lived or not. All the miracles in the world are of no use to virtue, morality, or justice. Miracles belong to superstition, to ignorance, to fear and folly.

Neither does it make any difference who wrote the Gospels. They are worth the truth that is in them and no more.

The words of Paul are often quoted, that "all

scripture is given by inspiration of God." Of course that could not have applied to anything written after that time. It could have applied only to the Scriptures then written and then known. It is perfectly clear that the four Gospels were not at that time written, and therefore this statement of Paul's does not apply to the four Gospels. Neither does it apply to anything written after that statement was written. Neither does it apply to that statement. If it applied to anything it was the Old Testament, and not the New.

Christ has been belittled by his worshipers. When stripped of the miraculous; when allowed to be, not divine but divinely human, he will have gained a thousandfold in the estimation of mankind. I think of him as I do of Buddha, as I do of Confucius, of Epictetus, of Bruno. I place him with the great, the generous, the self-denying of the earth, and for the man Christ, I feel only admiration and respect. I think he was in many things mistaken. His reliance upon the goodness of God was perfect. He seemed to believe that his father in heaven would protect him. He thought that if God clothed the lilies of the field in beauty, if he provided for the sparrows, he would surely protect a perfectly just and loving man. In this he was mistaken; and in the darkness

of death, overwhelmed, he cried out: "Why hast thou forsaken me?"

I do not believe that Christ ever claimed to be divine; ever claimed to be inspired; ever claimed to work a miracle. In short, I believe that he was an honest man. These claims were all put in his mouth by others—by mistaken friends, by ignorant worshipers, by zealous and credulous followers, and sometimes by dishonest and designing priests. This has happened to all the great men of the world. All historical characters are, in part, deformed or reformed by fiction. There was a man by the name of George Washington, but no such George Washington ever existed as we find portrayed in history. The historical Cæsar never lived. The historical Mohammed is simply a myth. It is the task of modern criticism to rescue these characters, and in the mass of superstitious rubbish to find the actual man. Christians borrowed the old clothes of the Olympian gods and gave them to Christ. To me, Christ the man is far greater than Christ the god.

To me, it has always been a matter of wonder that Christ said nothing as to the obligation man is under to his country, nothing as to the rights of the people as against the wish and will of kings, nothing

against the frightful system of human slavery—almost universal in his time. What he did not say is altogether more wonderful than what he did say. It is marvelous that he said nothing upon the subject of intemperance, nothing about education, nothing about philosophy, nothing about nature, nothing about art. He said nothing in favor of the home, except to offer a reward to those who would desert their wives and families. Of course, I do not believe that he said the words that were attributed to him, in which a reward is offered to any man who will desert his kindred. But if we take the account given in the four Gospels as the true account, then Christ did offer a reward to a father who would desert his children. It has always been contended that he was a perfect example of mankind, and yet he never married. As a result of what he did not teach in connection with what he *did* teach, his followers saw no harm in slavery, no harm in polygamy. They belittled this world and exaggerated the importance of the next. They consoled the slave by telling him that in a little while he would exchange his chains for wings. They comforted the captive by saying that in a few days he would leave his dungeon for the bowers of Paradise. His followers believed that he had said that "Whosoever believeth not shall

be damned." This passage was the cross upon which intellectual liberty was crucified.

If Christ had given us the laws of health; if he had told us how to cure disease by natural means; if he had set the captive free; if he had crowned the people with their rightful power; if he had placed the home above the church; if he had broken all the mental chains; if he had flooded all the caves and dens of fear with light, and filled the future with a common joy, he would in truth have been the Savior of this world.

Question. How do you account for the difference between the Christian and other modern civilizations?

Answer. I account for the difference between men by the difference in their ancestry and surroundings—the difference in soil, climate, food, and employment. There would be no civilization in England were it not for the Gulf Stream. There would have been very little here had it not been for the discovery of Columbus. And even now on this continent there would be but little civilization had the soil been poor. I might ask: How do you account for the civilization of Egypt? At one time that was the greatest civilization in the world. Did that fact prove that the Egyptian religion was of divine

origin? So, too, there was a time when the civilization of India was beyond all others. Does that prove that Vishnu was a God? Greece dominated the intellectual world for centuries. Does that fact absolutely prove that Zeus was the creator of heaven and earth? The same may be said of Rome. There was a time when Rome governed the world, and yet I have always had my doubts as to the truth of the Roman mythology. As a matter of fact, Rome was far better than any Christian nation ever was to the end of the seventeenth century. A thousand years of Christian rule produced no fellow for the greatest of Rome. There were no poets the equals of Horace or Virgil, no philosophers as great as Lucretius, no orators like Cicero, no emperors like Marcus Aurelius, no women like the mothers of Rome.

The civilization of a country may be hindered by a religion, but it has never been increased by any form of superstition. When America was discovered it had the same effect upon Europe that it would have, for instance, upon the city of Chicago to have Lake Michigan put the other side of it. The Mediterranean lost its trade. The centers of commerce became deserted. The prow of the world turned westward, and, as a result, France, England,

and all countries bordering on the Atlantic became prosperous. The world has really been civilized by discoverers—by thinkers. The man who invented powder, and by that means released hundreds of thousands of men from the occupations of war, did more for mankind than religion. The inventor of paper—and he was not a Christian—did more than all the early fathers for mankind. The inventors of plows, of sickles, of cradles, of reapers; the inventors of wagons, coaches, locomotives; the inventors of skiffs, sail-vessels, steamships; the men who have made looms—in short, the inventors of all useful things—they are the civilizers taken in connection with the great thinkers, the poets, the musicians, the actors, the painters, the sculptors. The men who have invented the useful, and the men who have made the useful beautiful, are the real civilizers of mankind.

The priests, in all ages, have been hindrances—stumbling-blocks. They have prevented man from using his reason. They have told ghost stories to courage until courage became fear. They have done all in their power to keep men from growing intellectually, to keep the world in a state of childhood, that they themselves might be deemed great and good and wise. They have always known that

their reputation for wisdom depended upon the ignorance of the people.

I account for the civilization of France by such men as Voltaire. He did good by assisting to destroy the church. Luther did good exactly in the same way. He did harm in building another church. I account, in part, for the civilization of England by the fact that she had interests greater than the church could control; and by the further fact that her greatest men cared nothing for the church. I account in part for the civilization of America by the fact that our fathers were wise enough, and jealous of each other enough, to absolutely divorce church and state. They regarded the church as a dangerous mistress—one not fit to govern a president. This divorce was obtained because men like Jefferson and Paine were at that time prominent in the councils of the people. There is this peculiarity in our country—the only men who can be trusted with human liberty are the ones who are not to be angels hereafter. Liberty is safe so long as the sinners have an opportunity to be heard.

Neither must we imagine that our civilization is the only one in the world. They had no locks and keys in Japan until that country was visited by Christians, and they are now used only in those

ports where Christians are allowed to enter. It has often been claimed that there is but one way to make a man temperate, and that is by making him a Christian; and this is claimed in face of the fact that Christian nations are the most intemperate in the world. For nearly thirteen centuries the followers of Mohammed have been absolute teetotalers—not one drunkard under the flag of the star and crescent. Wherever, in Turkey, a man is seen under the influence of liquor, they call him a Christian. You must also remember that almost every Christian nation has held slaves. Only a few years ago England was engaged in the slave trade. A little while before that our Puritan ancestors sold white Quaker children in the Barbadoes, and traded them for rum, sugar, and negro slaves. Even now the latest champion of Christianity upholds slavery, polygamy, and wars of extermination.

Sometimes I suspect that our own civilization is not altogether perfect. When I think of the penitentiaries crammed to suffocation, and of the many who ought to be in; of the want, the filth, the depravity of the great cities; of the starvation in the manufacturing centers of Great Britain, and, in fact, of all Europe; when I see women working like beasts of burden, and little children deprived, not

simply of education, but of air, light and food, there is a suspicion in my mind that Christian civilization is not a complete and overwhelming success.

After all, I am compelled to account for the advance that we have made, by the discoveries and inventions of men of genius. For the future I rely upon the sciences; upon the cultivation of the intellect. I rely upon labor; upon human interests in this world; upon the love of wife and children and home. I do not rely upon sacred books, but upon good men and women. I do not rely upon superstition, but upon knowledge; not upon miracles, but upon facts; not upon the dead, but upon the living; and when we become absolutely civilized, we shall look back upon the superstitions of the world, not simply with contempt, but with pity.

Neither do I rely upon missionaries to convert those whom we are pleased to call "the heathen." Honest commerce is the great civilizer. We exchange ideas when we exchange fabrics. The effort to force a religion upon the people always ends in war. Commerce, founded upon mutual advantage, makes peace. An honest merchant is better than a missionary.

Spain was blessed with what is called Christian civilization, and yet, for hundreds of years, that

government was simply an organized crime. When one pronounces the name of Spain, he thinks of the invasion of the New World, the persecution in the Netherlands, the expulsion of the Jews, and the Inquisition. Even to-day, the Christian nations of Europe preserve themselves from each other by bayonet and ball. Prussia has a standing army of six hundred thousand men, France a half million, and all their neighbors a like proportion. These countries are civilized. They are in the enjoyment of Christian governments—have their hundreds of thousands of ministers, and the land covered with cathedrals and churches—and yet every nation is nearly beggared by keeping armies in the field. Christian kings have no confidence in the promises of each other. What they call peace is the little time necessarily spent in reloading their guns. England has hundreds of ships of war to protect her commerce from other Christians, and to force China to open her ports to the opium trade. Only the other day the Prime Minister of China, in one of his dispatches to the English government, used substantially the following language: "England regards the opium question simply as one of trade, but to China, it has a moral aspect." Think of Christian England carrying death and desolation to

hundreds of thousands in the name of trade. Then think of heathen China protesting in the name of morality. At the same time England has the impudence to send missionaries to China.

What has been called Christianity has been a disturber of the public peace in all countries and at all times. Nothing has so alienated nations, nothing has so destroyed the natural justice of mankind, as what has been known as religion. The idea that all men must worship the same God, believe the same dogmas, has for thousands of years plucked with bloody hands the flower of pity from the human heart.

Our civilization is not Christian. It does not come from the skies. It is not a result of "inspiration." It is the child of invention, of discovery, of applied knowledge—that is to say, of science. When man becomes great and grand enough to admit that all have equal rights; when thought is untrammeled; when worship shall consist in doing useful things; when religion means the discharge of obligations to our fellow-men, then, and not until then, will the world be civilized.

II.

Question. Since Laplace and other most distinguished astronomers hold to the theory that the earth was originally in a gaseous state, and then a molten mass in which the germs, even, of vegetable or animal life, could not exist, how do you account for the origin of life on this planet without a "Creator"?—Dr. T. B. Taylor.

Answer. Whether or not "the earth was originally in a gaseous state and afterwards a molten mass in which the germs of vegetable and animal life could not exist," I do not know. My belief is that the earth as it is, and as it was, taken in connection with the influence of the sun, and of other planets, produced whatever has existed or does exist on the earth. I do not see why gas would not need a "creator" as much as a vegetable. Neither can I imagine that there is any more necessity for some one to start life than to start a molten mass. There may be now portions of the world in which there is not

one particle of vegetable life. It may be that on the wide waste fields of the Arctic zone there are places where no vegetable life exists, and there may be many thousand miles where no animal life can be found. But if the poles of the earth could be changed, and if the Arctic zone could be placed in a different relative position to the sun, the snows would melt, the hills would appear, and in a little while even the rocks would be clothed with vegetation. After a time vegetation would produce more soil, and in a few thousand years forests would be filled with beasts and birds.

I think it was Sir William Thomson who, in his effort to account for the origin of life upon this earth, stated that it might have come from some meteoric stone falling from some other planet having in it the germs of life. What would you think of a farmer who would prepare his land and wait to have it planted by meteoric stones? So, what would you think of a Deity who would make a world like this, and allow it to whirl thousands and millions of years, barren as a gravestone, waiting for some vagrant comet to sow the seeds of life?

I believe that back of animal life is the vegetable, and back of the vegetable, it may be, is the mineral. It may be that crystallization is the first step toward

what we call life, and yet I believe life is back of that. In my judgment, if the earth ever was in a gaseous state, it was filled with life. These are subjects about which we know but little. How do you account for chemistry? How do you account for the fact that just so many particles of one kind seek the society of just so many particles of another, and when they meet they instantly form a glad and lasting union? How do you know but atoms have love and hatred? How do you know that the vegetable does not enjoy growing, and that crystallization itself is not an expression of delight? How do you know that a vine bursting into flower does not feel a thrill? We find sex in the meanest weeds—how can you say they have no loves?

After all, of what use is it to search for a creator? The difficulty is not thus solved. You leave your creator as much in need of a creator as anything your creator is supposed to have created. The bottom of your stairs rests on nothing, and the top of your stairs leans upon nothing. You have reached no solution.

The word "God" is simply born of our ignorance. We go as far as we can, and we say the rest of the way is "God." We look as far as we can, and beyond the horizon, where there is nought so far as we

know but blindness, we place our Deity. We see an infinitesimal segment of a circle, and we say the rest is "God."

Man must give up searching for the origin of anything. No one knows the origin of life, or of matter, or of what we call mind. The whence and the whither are questions that no man can answer. In the presence of these questions all intellects are upon a level. The barbarian knows exactly the same as the scientist, the fool as the philosopher. Only those who think that they have had some supernatural information pretend to answer these questions, and the unknowable, the impossible, the unfathomable, is the realm wholly occupied by the "inspired."

We are satisfied that all organized things must have had a beginning, but we cannot conceive that matter commenced to be. Forms change, but substance remains eternally the same. A beginning of substance is unthinkable. It is just as easy to conceive of anything commencing to exist *without* a cause as *with* a cause. There must be something for cause to operate upon. Cause operating upon nothing—were such a thing possible—would produce nothing. There can be no relation between cause and nothing. We can understand how things can be arranged—

joined or separated—and how relations can be changed or destroyed, but we cannot conceive of creation—of nothing being changed into something, nor of something being made—except from pre-existing materials.

Question. Since the universal testimony of the ages is in the affirmative of phenomena that attest the continued existence of man after death—which testimony is overwhelmingly sustained by the phenomena of the nineteenth century—what further evidence should thoughtful people require in order to settle the question, "Does death end all?"

Answer. I admit that in all ages men have believed in spooks and ghosts and signs and wonders. This, however, proves nothing. Men have for thousands of ages believed the impossible, and worshiped the absurd. Our ancestors have worshiped snakes and birds and beasts. I do not admit that any ghost ever existed. I know that no miracle was ever performed except in imagination; and what you are pleased to call the "phenomena of the nineteenth century," I fear are on an exact equality with the phenomena of the Dark Ages.

We do not yet understand the action of the brain. No one knows the origin of a thought. No one knows how he thinks, or why he thinks, any more

than one knows why or how his heart beats. People, I imagine, have always had dreams. In dreams they often met persons whom they knew to be dead, and it may be that much of the philosophy of the present was born of dreams. I cannot admit that anything supernatural ever has happened or ever will happen. I cannot admit the truth of what you call the "phenomena of the nineteenth century," if by such "phenomena" you mean the reappearance of the dead. I do not deny the existence of a future state, because I do not know. Neither do I aver that there is one, because I do not know. Upon this question I am simply honest. I find that people who believe in immortality—or at least those who say they do—are just as afraid of death as anybody else. I find that the most devout Christian weeps as bitterly above his dead, as the man who says that death ends all. You see the promises are so far away, and the dead are so near. Still, I do not say that man is not immortal; but I do say that there is nothing in the Bible to show that he is. The Old Testament has not a word upon the subject—except to show us how we lost immortality. According to that book, man was driven from the Garden of Eden, lest he should put forth his hand and eat of the fruit of the tree of life and live for-

ever. So the fact is, the Old Testament shows us how we lost immortality. In the New Testament we are told to seek for immortality, and it is also stated that "God alone hath immortality."

There is this curious thing about Christians and Spiritualists: The Spiritualists laugh at the Christians for believing the miracles of the New Testament; they laugh at them for believing the story about the witch of Endor. And then the Christians laugh at the Spiritualists for believing that the same kind of things happen now. As a matter of fact, the Spiritualists have the best of it, because their witnesses are now living, whereas the Christians take simply the word of the dead—of men they never saw and of men about whom they know nothing. The Spiritualist, at least, takes the testimony of men and women that he can cross-examine. It would seem as if these gentlemen ought to make common cause. Then the Christians could prove their miracles by the Spiritualists, and the Spiritualists could prove their "phenomena" by the Christians.

I believe that thoughtful people require some additional testimony in order to settle the question, "Does death end all?" If the dead return to this world they should bring us information of value.

There are thousands of questions that studious historians and savants are endeavoring to settle—questions of history, of philosophy, of law, of art, upon which a few intelligent dead ought to be able to shed a flood of light. All the questions of the past ought to be settled. Some modern ghosts ought to get acquainted with some of the Pharaohs, and give us an outline of the history of Egypt. They ought to be able to read the arrow-headed writing and all the records of the past. The hieroglyphics of all ancient peoples should be unlocked, and thoughts and facts that have been imprisoned for so many thousand years should be released and once again allowed to visit brains. The Spiritualists ought to be able to give us the history of buried cities. They should clothe with life the dust of all the past. If they could only bring us valuable information; if they could only tell us about some steamer in distress so that succor could be sent; if they could only do something useful, the world would cheerfully accept their theories and admit their "facts." I think that thoughtful people have the right to demand such evidence. I would like to have the spirits give us the history of all the books of the New Testament and tell us who first told of the miracles. If they could give us

the history of any religion, or nation, or anything, I should have far more confidence in the "phenomena of the nineteenth century."

There is one thing about the Spiritualists I like, and that is, they are liberal. They give to others the rights they claim for themselves. They do not pollute their souls with the dogma of eternal pain. They do not slander and persecute even those who deny their "phenomena." But I cannot admit that they have furnished conclusive evidence that death does not end all. Beyond the horizon of this life we have not seen. From the mysterious beyond no messenger has come to me.

For the whole world I would not blot from the sky of the future a single star. Arched by the bow of hope let the dead sleep.

Question. How, when, where, and by whom was our present calendar originated,—that is "Anno Domini,"—and what event in the history of the nations does it establish as a fact, if not the birth of Jesus of Nazareth?

Answer. I have already said, in answer to a question by another gentleman, that I believe the man Jesus Christ existed, and we now date from somewhere near his birth. I very much doubt about

his having been born on Christmas, because in reading other religions, I find that that time has been celebrated for thousands of years, and the cause of it is this:

About the 21st or 22d of December is the shortest day. After that the days begin to lengthen and the sun comes back, and for many centuries in most nations they had a festival in commemoration of that event. The Christians, I presume, adopted this day, and made the birth of Christ fit it. Three months afterward—the 21st of March—the days and nights again become equal, and the day then begins to lengthen. For centuries the nations living in the temperate zones have held festivals to commemorate the coming of spring—the yearly miracle of leaf, of bud and flower. This is the celebration known as Easter, and the Christians adopted that in commemoration of Christ's resurrection. So that, as a matter of fact, these festivals of Christmas and Easter do not even tend to show that they stand for or are in any way connected with the birth or resurrection of Christ. In fact the evidence is overwhelmingly the other way.

While we are on the calendar business it may be well enough to say that we get our numerals from the Arabs, from whom also we obtained our ideas of

algebra. The higher mathematics came to us from the same source. So from the Arabs we receive chemistry, and our first true notions of geography. They gave us also paper and cotton.

Owing to the fact that the earth does not make its circuit in the exact time of three hundred and sixty-five days and a quarter, and owing to the fact that it was a long time before any near approach was made to the actual time, all calendars after awhile became too inaccurate for general use, and they were from time to time changed.

Right here, it may be well enough to remark, that all the monuments and festivals in the world are not sufficient to establish an impossible event. No amount of monumental testimony, no amount of living evidence, can substantiate a miracle. The monument only proves the *belief* of the builders.

If we rely upon the evidence of monuments, calendars, dates, and festivals, all the religions on the earth can be substantiated. Turkey is filled with such monuments and much of the time wasted in such festivals. We celebrate the Fourth of July, but such celebration does not even tend to prove that God, by his special providence, protected Washington from the arrows of an Indian. The Hebrews celebrate what is called the Passover, but

this celebration does not even tend to prove that the angel of the Lord put blood on the door-posts in Egypt. The Mohammedans celebrate to-day the flight of Mohammed, but that does not tend to prove that Mohammed was inspired and was a prophet of God.

Nobody can change a falsehood to a truth by the erection of a monument. Monuments simply prove that people endeavor to substantiate truths and falsehoods by the same means.

III.

Question. Letting the question as to hell hereafter rest for the present, how do you account for the hell here—namely, the existence of pain? There are people who, by no fault of their own, are at this present time in misery. If for these there is no life to come, their existence is a mistake; but if there is a life to come, it may be that the sequel to the acts of the play to come will justify the pain and misery of this present time?—Rev. Myron W. Reed.

Answer. There are four principal theories:

First—That there is behind the universe a being of infinite power and wisdom, kindness, and justice.

Second—That the universe has existed from eternity, and that it is the only eternal existence, and that behind it is no creator.

Third—That there is a God who made the universe, but who is not all-powerful and who is, under the circumstances, doing the best he can.

Fourth—That there is an all-powerful God who

made the universe, and that there is also a nearly all-powerful devil, and this devil ravels about as fast as this God knits.

By the last theory, as taught by Plato, it is extremely easy to account for the misery in this world. If we admit that there is a malevolent being with power enough, and with cunning enough, to frequently circumvent God, the problem of evil becomes solved so far as this world is concerned. But why this being was evil is still unsolved; why the devil is malevolent is still a mystery. Consequently you will have to go back of this world, on that theory, to account for the origin of evil. If this devil always existed, then, of course, the universe at one time was inhabited only by this God and this devil.

If the third theory is correct, we can account for the fact that God does not see to it that justice is always done.

If the second theory is true, that the universe has existed from eternity, and is without a creator, then we must account for the existence of evil and good, not by personalities behind the universe, but by the nature of things.

If there is an infinitely good and wise being who created all, it seems to me that he should have made a world in which innocence should be a sufficient

shield. He should have made a world where the just man should have nothing to fear.

My belief is this: We are surrounded by obstacles. We are filled with wants. We must have clothes. We must have food. We must protect ourselves from sun and storm, from heat and cold. In our conflict with these obstacles, with each other, and with what may be called the forces of nature, all do not succeed. It is a fact in nature that like begets like; that man gives his constitution, at least in part, to his children; that weakness and strength are in some degree both hereditary. This is a fact in nature. I do not hold any god responsible for this fact—filled as it is with pain and joy. But it seems to me that an infinite God should so have arranged matters that the bad would not pass—that it would die with its possessor—that the good should survive, and that the man should give to his son, not the result of his vices, but the fruit of his virtues.

I cannot see why we should expect an infinite God to do better in another world than he does in this. If he allows injustice to prevail here, why will he not allow the same thing in the world to come? If there is any being with power to prevent it, why is crime permitted? If a man standing upon the rail-

way should ascertain that a bridge had been carried off by a flood, and if he also knew that the train was coming filled with men, women, and children; with husbands going to their wives, and wives rejoining their families; if he made no effort to stop that train; if he simply sat down by the roadside to witness the catastrophe, and so remained until the train dashed off the precipice, and its load of life became a mass of quivering flesh, he would be denounced by every good man as the most monstrous of human beings. And yet this is exactly what the supposed God does. He, if he exists, sees the train rushing to the gulf. He gives no notice. He sees the ship rushing for the hidden rock. He makes no sign. And he so constructed the world that assassins lurk in the air—hide even in the sunshine—and when we imagine that we are breathing the breath of life, we are taking into ourselves the seeds of death.

There are two facts inconsistent in my mind—a martyr and a God. Injustice upon earth renders the justice of heaven impossible.

I would not take from those suffering in this world the hope of happiness hereafter. My principal object has been to take away from them the fear of eternal pain hereafter. Still, it is impossible for

me to explain the facts by which I am surrounded, if I admit the existence of an infinite Being. I find in this world that physical and mental evils afflict the good. It seems to me that I have the same reason to expect the bad to be rewarded hereafter. I have no right to suppose that infinite wisdom will ever know any more, or that infinite benevolence will increase in kindness, or that the justice of the eternal can change. If, then, this eternal being allows the good to suffer pain here, what right have we to say that he will not allow them to suffer forever?

Some people have insisted that this life is a kind of school for the production of self-denying men and women—that is, for the production of character. The statistics show that a large majority die under five years of age. What would we think of a schoolmaster who killed the most of his pupils the first day? If this doctrine is true, and if manhood cannot be produced in heaven, those who die in childhood are infinitely unfortunate.

I admit that, although I do not understand the subject, still, all pain, all misery may be for the best. I do not know. If there is an infinitely wise Being. who is also infinitely powerful, then everything that happens must be for the best. That philosophy of

special providence, going to the extreme, is infinitely better than most of the Christian creeds. There seems to be no half-way house between special providence and atheism. You know some of the Buddhists say that when a man commits murder, that is the best thing he could have done, and that to be murdered was the best thing that could have happened to the killed. They insist that every step taken is the necessary step and the best step; that crimes are as necessary as virtues, and that the fruit of crime and virtue is finally the same.

But whatever theories we have, we have at last to be governed by the facts. We are in a world where vice, deformity, weakness, and disease are hereditary. In the presence of this immense and solemn truth rises the religion of the body. Every man should refuse to increase the misery of this world. And it may be that the time will come when man will be great enough and grand enough utterly to refrain from the propagation of disease and deformity, and when only the healthy will be fathers and mothers. We do know that the misery in this world can be lessened; consequently I believe in the religion of this world. And whether there is a heaven or hell here, or hereafter, every good man has enough to do to make this world a little better than

it is. Millions of lives are wasted in the vain effort to find the origin of things, and the destiny of man. This world has been neglected. We have been taught that life should be merely a preparation for death.

To avoid pain we must know the conditions of health. For the accomplishment of this end we must rely upon investigation instead of faith, upon labor in place of prayer. Most misery is produced by ignorance. Passions sow the seeds of pain.

Question. State with what words you can comfort those who have, by their own fault, or by the fault of others, found this life not worth living?

Answer. If there is no life beyond this, and so believing I come to the bedside of the dying—of one whose life has been a failure—a "life not worth living," I could at least say to such an one, "Your failure ends with your death. Beyond the tomb there is nothing for you—neither pain nor misery, neither grief nor joy." But if I were a good orthodox Christian, then I would have to say to this man, "Your life has been a failure; you have not been a Christian, and the failure will be extended eternally; you have not only been a failure for a time, but you will be a failure forever."

Admitting that there is another world, and that the man's life had been a failure in this, then I should say to him, "If you live again, you will have the eternal opportunity to reform. There will be no time, no date, no matter how many millions and billions of ages may have passed away, at which you will not have the opportunity of doing right."

Under no circumstances could I consistently say to this man: "Although your life has been a failure; although you have made hundreds and thousands of others suffer; although you have deceived and betrayed the woman who loved you; although you have murdered your benefactor; still, if you will now repent and believe a something that is unreasonable or reasonable to your mind, you will, at the moment of death, be transferred to a world of eternal joy." This I could not say. I would tell him, "If you die a bad man here, you will commence the life to come with the same character you leave this. Character cannot be made by another for you. You must be the architect of your own." There is to me unspeakably more comfort in the idea that every failure ends here, than that it is to be perpetuated forever.

How can a Christian comfort the mother of a girl who has died without believing in Christ? What

doctrine is there in Christianity to wipe away her tears? What words of comfort can you offer to the mother whose brave boy fell in defence of his country, she knowing and you knowing, that the boy was not a Christian, that he did not believe in the Bible, and had no faith in the blood of the atonement? What words of comfort have you for such fathers and for such mothers?

To me, there is no doctrine so infinitely absurd as the idea that this life is a probationary state—that the few moments spent here decide the fate of a human soul forever. Nothing can be conceived more merciless, more unjust. I am doing all I can to destroy that doctrine. I want, if possible, to get the shadow of hell from the human heart.

Why has any life been a failure here? If God is a being of infinite wisdom and kindness, why does he make failures? What excuse has infinite wisdom for peopling the world with savages? Why should one feel grateful to God for having made him with a poor, weak and diseased brain; for having allowed him to be the heir of consumption, of scrofula, or of insanity? Why should one thank God, who lived and died a slave?

After all, is it not of more importance to speak the absolute truth? Is it not manlier to tell the

fact than to endeavor to convey comfort through falsehood? People must reap not only what they sow, but what others have sown. The people of the whole world are united in spite of themselves.

Next to telling a man, whose life has been a failure, that he is to enjoy an immortality of delight—next to that, is to assure him that a place of eternal punishment does not exist.

After all, there are but few lives worth living in any great and splendid sense. Nature seems filled with failure, and she has made no exception in favor of man. To the greatest, to the most successful, there comes a time when the fevered lips of life long for the cool, delicious kiss of death—when, tired of the dust and glare of day, they hear with joy the rustling garments of the night.

IV.

"ARCHIBALD ARMSTRONG and Jonathan Newgate were fast friends. Their views in regard to the question of a future life, and the existence of a God, were in perfect accord. They said: 'We know so little about these matters that we are not justified in giving them any serious consideration. Our motto and rule of life shall be for each one to make himself as comfortable as he can, and enjoy every pleasure within his reach, not allowing himself to be influenced at all by thoughts of a future life.'

"Both had some money. Archibald had a large amount. Once upon a time when no human eye saw him—and he had no belief in a God—Jonathan stole every dollar of his friend's wealth, leaving him penniless. He had no fear, no remorse; no one saw him do the deed. He became rich, enjoyed life immensely, lived in contentment and pleasure, until in mellow old age he went the way of all flesh. Archibald fared badly. The odds were against him.

His money was gone. He lived in penury and discontent, dissatisfied with mankind and with himself, until at last, overcome by misfortune, and depressed by an incurable malady, he sought rest in painless suicide."

Question. What are we to think of the rule of life laid down by these men? Was either of them inconsistent or illogical? Is there no remedy to correct such irregularities?—REV. D. O'DONAGHUE.

Answer. The Rev. Mr. O'Donaghue seems to entertain strange ideas as to right and wrong. He tells us that Archibald Armstrong and Jonathan Newgate concluded to make themselves as comfortable as they could and enjoy every pleasure within their reach, and the Rev. Mr. O'Donaghue states that one of the pleasures within the reach of Mr. Newgate was to steal what little money Mr. Armstrong had. Does the reverend gentleman think that Mr. Newgate made or could make himself comfortable in that way? He tells us that Mr. Newgate "had no remorse,"—that he "became rich and enjoyed life immensely,"—that he "lived in contentment and pleasure, until, in mellow old age, he went the way of all flesh."

Does the reverend gentleman really believe that

a man can steal without fear, without remorse? Does he really suppose that one can enjoy the fruits of theft, that a criminal can live a contented and happy life, that one who has robbed his friend can reach a mellow and delightful old age? Is this the philosophy of the Rev. Mr. O'Donaghue?

And right here I may be permitted to ask, Why did the Rev. Mr. O'Donaghue's God allow a thief to live without fear, without remorse, to enjoy life immensely and to reach a mellow old age? And why did he allow Mr. Armstrong, who had been robbed, to live in penury and discontent, until at last, overcome by misfortune, he sought rest in suicide? Does the Rev. Mr. O'Donaghue mean to say that if there is no future life it is wise to steal in this? If the grave is the eternal home, would the Rev. Mr. O'Donaghue advise people to commit crimes in order that they may enjoy this life? Such is not my philosophy. Whether there is a God or not, truth is better than falsehood. Whether there is a heaven or hell, honesty is always the best policy. There is no world, and can be none, where vice can sow the seed of crime and reap the sheaves of joy.

According to my view, Mr. Armstrong was altogether more fortunate than Mr. Newgate. I had

rather be robbed than to be a robber, and I had rather be of such a disposition that I would be driven to suicide by misfortune than to live in contentment upon the misfortunes of others. The reverend gentleman, however, should have made his question complete—he should have gone the entire distance. He should have added that Mr. Newgate, after having reached a mellow old age, was suddenly converted, joined the church, and died in the odor of sanctity on the very day that his victim committed suicide.

But I will answer the fable of the reverend gentleman with a fact.

A young man was in love with a girl. She was young, beautiful, and trustful. She belonged to no church—knew nothing about a future world—basked in the sunshine of this. All her life had been filled with gentle deeds. The tears of pity had sanctified her cheeks. She believed in no religion, worshiped no God, believed no Bible, but loved everything. Her lover in a fit of jealous rage murdered her. He was tried; convicted; a motion for a new trial overruled and a pardon refused. In his cell, in the shadow of death, he was converted—he became a Catholic. With the white lips of fear he confessed to a priest. He received the sacrament.

He was hanged, and from the rope's end winged his way to the realms of bliss. For months the murdered girl had suffered all the pains and pangs of hell.

The poor girl will endure the agony of the damned forever, while her murderer will be ravished with angelic chant and song. Such is the justice of the orthodox God.

Allow me to use the language of the reverend gentleman: "Is there no remedy to correct such irregularities?"

As long as the idea of eternal punishment remains a part of the Christian system, that system will be opposed by every man of heart and brain. Of all religious dogmas it is the most shocking, infamous, and absurd. The preachers of this doctrine are the enemies of human happiness; they are the assassins of natural joy. Every father, every mother, every good man, every loving woman, should hold this doctrine in abhorrence; they should refuse to pay men for preaching it; they should not build churches in which this infamy is taught; they should teach their little children that it is a lie; they should take this horror from childhood's heart—a horror that makes the cradle as terrible as the coffin.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINES.*

Question. The clergymen who have been interviewed, almost unanimously have declared that the church is suffering very little from the skepticism of the day, and that the influence of the scientific writers, whose opinions are regarded as atheistic or infidel, is not great; and that the books of such writers are not read as much as some people think they are. What is your opinion with regard to that subject?

Answer. It is natural for a man to defend his business, to stand by his class, his caste, his creed. And I suppose this accounts for the ministers all saying that infidelity is not on the increase. By comparing long periods of time, it is very easy to see the progress that has been made. Only a few years ago men who are now considered quite orthodox would have been imprisoned, or at least mobbed, for heresy. Only a few years ago men like Huxley and Tyndall and Spencer and Darwin and Humboldt would have been considered as the most infamous of monsters.

* *Brooklyn Union*, 1882.

Only a few years ago science was superstition's hired man. The scientific men apologized for every fact they happened to find. With hat in hand they begged pardon of the parson for finding a fossil, and asked the forgiveness of God for making any discovery in nature. At that time every scientific discovery was something to be pardoned. Moses was authority in geology, and Joshua was considered the first astronomer of the world. Now everything has changed, and everybody knows it except the clergy. Now religion is taking off its hat to science. Religion is finding out new meanings for old texts. We are told that God spoke in the language of the common people; that he was not teaching any science; that he allowed his children not only to remain in error, but kept them there. It is now admitted that the Bible is no authority on any question of natural fact; it is inspired only in morality, in a spiritual way. All, except the Brooklyn ministers, see that the Bible has ceased to be regarded as authority. Nobody appeals to a passage to settle a dispute of fact. The most intellectual men of the world laugh at the idea of inspiration. Men of the greatest reputations hold all supernaturalism in contempt. Millions of people are reading the opinions of men who combat and deny the foundation of orthodox

Christianity. Humboldt stands higher than all the apostles. Darwin has done more to change human thought than all the priests who have existed. Where there was one infidel twenty-five years ago, there are one hundred now. I can remember when I would be the only infidel in the town. Now I meet them thick as autumn leaves; they are everywhere. In all the professions, trades, and employments, the orthodox creeds are despised. They are not simply disbelieved; they are execrated. They are regarded, not with indifference, but with passionate hatred. Thousands and hundreds of thousands of mechanics in this country abhor orthodox Christianity. Millions of educated men hold in immeasurable contempt the doctrine of eternal punishment. The doctrine of atonement is regarded as absurd by millions. So with the dogma of imputed guilt, vicarious virtue, and vicarious vice. I see that the Rev. Dr. Eddy advises ministers not to answer the arguments of infidels in the pulpit, and gives this wonderful reason: That the hearers will get more doubts from the answer than from reading the original arguments. So the Rev. Dr. Hawkins admits that he cannot defend Christianity from infidel attacks without creating more infidelity. So the Rev. Dr. Haynes admits that he cannot answer the theories of Robertson

Smith in popular addresses. The only minister who feels absolutely safe on this subject, so far as his congregation is concerned, seems to be the Rev. Joseph Pullman. He declares that the young people in his church don't know enough to have intelligent doubts, and that the old people are substantially in the same condition. Mr. Pullman feels that he is behind a breastwork so strong that other defence is unnecessary. So the Rev. Mr. Foote thinks that infidelity should never be refuted in the pulpit. I admit that it never has been successfully done, but I did not suppose so many ministers admitted the impossibility. Mr. Foote is opposed to all public discussion. Dr. Wells tells us that scientific atheism should be ignored; that it should not be spoken of in the pulpit. The Rev, Dr. Van Dyke has the same feeling of security enjoyed by Dr. Pullman, and he declares that the great majority of the Christian people of to-day know nothing about current infidel theories. His idea is to let them remain in ignorance; that it would be dangerous for the Christian minister even to state the position of the infidel; that, after stating it, he might not, even with the help of God, successfully combat the theory. These ministers do not agree. Dr. Carpenter accounts for infidelity by nicotine in the blood. It is all smoke.

He thinks the blood of the human family has deteriorated. He thinks that the church is safe because the Christians read. He differs with his brothers Pullman and Van Dyke. So the Rev. George E. Reed believes that infidelity should be discussed in the pulpit. He has more confidence in his general and in the weapons of his warfare than some of his brethren. His confidence may arise from the fact that he has never had a discussion. The Rev. Dr. McClelland thinks the remedy is to stick by the catechism; that there is not now enough of authority; not enough of the brute force; thinks that the family, the church, and the state ought to use the rod; that the rod is the salvation of the world; that the rod is a divine institution; that fathers ought to have it for their children; that mothers ought to use it. This is a part of the religion of universal love. The man who cannot raise children without whipping them ought not to have them. The man who would mar the flesh of a boy or girl is unfit to have the control of a human being. The father who keeps a rod in his house keeps a relic of barbarism in his heart. There is nothing reformatory in punishment; nothing reformatory in fear. Kindness, guided by intelligence, is the only reforming force. An appeal to brute force

is an abandonment of love and reason, and puts father and child upon a savage equality; the savageness in the heart of the father prompting the use of the rod or club, produces a like savageness in the victim. The old idea that a child's spirit must be broken is infamous. All this is passing away, however, with orthodox Christianity. That children are treated better than formerly shows conclusively the increase of what is called infidelity. Infidelity has always been a protest against tyranny in the state, against intolerance in the church, against barbarism in the family. It has always been an appeal for light, for justice, for universal kindness and tenderness.

Question. The ministers say, I believe, Colonel, that worldliness is the greatest foe to the church, and admit that it is on the increase?

Answer. I see that all the ministers you have interviewed regard worldliness as the great enemy of the church. What is worldliness? I suppose worldliness consists in paying attention to the affairs of this world; getting enjoyment out of this life; gratifying the senses, giving the ears music, the eyes painting and sculpture, the palate good food; cultivating the imagination; playing games of chance;

adorning the person; developing the body; enriching the mind; investigating the facts by which we are surrounded; building homes; rocking cradles; thinking; working; inventing; buying; selling; hoping—all this, I suppose, is worldliness. These "worldly" people have cleared the forests, plowed the land, built the cities, the steamships, the telegraphs, and have produced all there is of worth and wonder in the world. Yet the preachers denounce them. Were it not for "worldly" people how would the preachers get along? Who would build the churches? Who would fill the contribution boxes and plates, and who (most serious of all questions) would pay the salaries? It is the habit of the ministers to belittle men who support them—to slander the spirit by which they live. "It is as though the mouth should tear the hand that feeds it." The nobility of the Old World hold the honest workingman in contempt, and yet are so contemptible themselves that they are willing to live upon his labor. And so the minister pretending to be spiritual—pretending to be a spiritual guide—looks with contempt upon the men who make it possible for him to live. It may be said by "worldliness" they only mean enjoyment—that is, hearing music, going to the theater and the opera, taking a

Sunday excursion to the silvery margin of the sea. Of course, ministers look upon theaters as rival attractions, and most of their hatred is born of business views. They think people ought to be driven to church by having all other places closed. In my judgment the theater has done good, while the church has done harm. The drama never has insisted upon burning anybody. Persecution is not born of the stage. On the contrary, upon the stage have forever been found impersonations of patriotism, heroism, courage, fortitude, and justice, and these impersonations have always been applauded, and have been represented that they might be applauded. In the pulpit,hypocrites have been worshiped; upon the stage they have been held up to derision and execration. Shakespeare has done far more for the world than the Bible. The ministers keep talking about spirituality as opposed to worldliness. Nothing can be more absurd than this talk of spirituality. As though readers of the Bible, repeaters of texts, and sayers of prayers were engaged in a higher work than honest industry. Is there anything higher than human love? A man is in love with a girl, and he has determined to work for her and to give his life that she may have a life of joy. Is there anything more spiritual than that

—anything higher? They marry. He clears some land. He fences a field. He builds a cabin; and she, of this hovel, makes a happy home. She plants flowers, puts a few simple things of beauty upon the walls. This is what the preachers call "worldliness." Is there anything more spiritual? In a little while, in this cabin, in this home, is heard the drowsy rhythm of the cradle's rock, while softly floats the lullaby upon the twilight air. Is there anything more spiritual, is there anything more infinitely tender than to see husband and wife bending, with clasped hands, over a cradle, gazing upon the dimpled miracle of love? I say it is spiritual to work for those you love; spiritual to improve the physical condition of mankind—for he who improves the physical condition improves the mental. I believe in the plowers instead of the prayers. I believe in the new firm of "Health & Heresy" rather than the old partnership of "Disease & Divinity," doing business at the old sign of the "Skull & Crossbones." Some of the ministers that you have interviewed, or at least one of them, tells us the cure for worldliness. He says that God is sending fires, and cyclones, and things of that character for the purpose of making people spiritual; of calling their attention to the fact that everything in this world is

of a transitory nature. The clergy have always had great faith in famine, in affliction, in pestilence. They know that a man is a thousand times more apt to thank God for a crust or a crumb than for a banquet. They know that prosperity has the same effect on the average Christian that thick soup has, according to Bumble, on the English pauper: "It makes 'em impudent." The devil made a mistake in not doubling Job's property instead of leaving him a pauper. In prosperity the ministers think that we forget death and are too happy. In the arms of those we love, the dogma of eternal fire is for the moment forgotten. According to the ministers, God kills our children in order that we may not forget him. They imagine that the man who goes into Dakota, cultivates the soil and rears him a little home, is getting too "worldly." And so God starts a cyclone to scatter his home and the limbs of wife and children upon the desolate plains, and the ministers in Brooklyn say this is done because we are getting too "worldly." They think we should be more "spiritual;" that is to say, willing to live upon the labor of others; willing to ask alms, saying, in the meantime, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." If this is so, why not give the money back? "Spiritual" people are those who

eat oatmeal and prunes, have great confidence in dried apples, read Cowper's "Task" and Pollok's "Course of Time," laugh at the jokes in *Harper's Monthly*, wear clothes shiny at the knees and elbows, and call all that has elevated the world "beggarly elements."

Question. Some of the clergymen who have been interviewed admit that the rich and poor no longer meet together, and deprecate the establishment of mission chapels in connection with the large and fashionable churches.

Answer. The early Christians supposed that the end of the world was at hand. They were all sitting on the dock waiting for the ship. In the presence of such a belief what are known as class distinctions could not easily exist. Most of them were exceedingly poor, and poverty is a bond of union. As a rule, people are hospitable in the proportion that they lack wealth. In old times, in the West, a stranger was always welcome. He took in part the place of the newspaper. He was a messenger from the older parts of the country. Life was monotonous. The appearance of the traveler gave variety. As people grow wealthy they grow exclusive. As they become educated there is a tendency to pick their

society. It is the same in the church. The church no longer believes the creed, no longer acts as though the creed were true. If the rich man regarded the sermon as a means of grace, as a kind of rope thrown by the minister to a man just above the falls; if he regarded it as a lifeboat, or as a lighthouse, he would not allow his coachman to remain outside. If he really believed that the coachman had an immortal soul, capable of eternal joy, liable to everlasting pain, he would do his utmost to make the calling and election of the said coachman sure. As a matter of fact the rich man now cares but little for servants. They are not included in the scheme of salvation, except as a kind of job lot. The church has become a club. It is a social affair, and the rich do not care to associate in the week days with the poor they may happen to meet at church. As they expect to be in heaven together forever, they can afford to be separated here. There will certainly be time enough there to get acquainted. Another thing is the magnificence of the churches. The church depends absolutely upon the rich. Poor people feel out of place in such magnificent buildings. They drop into the nearest seat; like poor relations, they sit on the extreme edge of the chair. At the table of Christ they are below the salt.

They are constantly humiliated. When subscriptions are asked for they feel ashamed to have their mite compared with the thousands given by the millionaire. The pennies feel ashamed to mingle with the silver in the contribution plate. The result is that most of them avoid the church. It costs too much to worship God in public. Good clothes are necessary, fashionably cut. The poor come in contact with too much silk, too many jewels, too many evidences of what is generally assumed to be superiority.

Question. Would this state of affairs be remedied if, instead of churches, we had societies of ethical culture? Would not the rich there predominate and the poor be just as much out of place?

Answer. I think the effect would be precisely the same, no matter what the society is, what object it has, if composed of rich and poor. Class distinctions, to a greater or less extent, will creep in—in fact, they do not have to creep in. They are there at the commencement, and they are born of the different conditions of the members.

These class distinctions are not always made by men of wealth. For instance, some men obtain money, and are what we call snobs. Others obtain

it and retain their democratic principles, and meet men according to the law of affinity, or general intelligence, on intellectual grounds, for instance.

There is not only the distinction produced by wealth and power, but there are the distinctions born of intelligence, of culture, of character, of end, object, aim in life. No one can blame an honest mechanic for holding a wealthy snob in utter contempt. Neither can any one blame respectable poverty for declining to associate with arrogant wealth. The right to make the distinction is with all classes, and with the individuals of all classes. It is impossible to have any society for any purpose—that is, where they meet together—without certain embarrassments being produced by these distinctions. Now, for instance, suppose there should be a society simply of intelligent and cultured people. There, wealth, to a great degree, would be disregarded. But, after all, the distinction that intelligence draws between talent and genius is as marked and cruel as was ever drawn between poverty and wealth. Wherever the accomplishment of some object is deemed of such vast importance that, for the moment, all minor distinctions are forgotten, then it is possible for the rich and poor, the ignorant and intelligent, to act in concert. This happens in political parties,

in time of war, and it has also happened whenever a new religion has been founded. Whenever the rich wish the assistance of the poor, distinctions are forgotten. It is upon the same principle that we gave liberty to the slave during the Civil war, and clad him in the uniform of the nation; we wanted him, we needed him; and, for the time, we were perfectly willing to forget the distinction of color. Common peril produces pure democracy. It is with societies as with individuals. A poor young man coming to New York, bent upon making his fortune, begins to talk about the old fogies; holds in contempt many of the rules and regulations of the trade; is loud in his denunciation of monopoly; wants competition; shouts for fair play, and is a real democrat. But let him succeed; let him have a palace in Fifth Avenue, with his monogram on spoons and coaches; then, instead of shouting for liberty, he will call for more police. He will then say: "We want protection; the rabble must be put down." We have an aristocracy of wealth. In some parts of our country an aristocracy of literature—men and women who imagine themselves writers and who hold in contempt all people who cannot express commonplaces in the most elegant diction—people who look upon a mistake in grammar as far worse than a crime. So, in

some communities we have an aristocracy of muscle. The only true aristocracy, probably, is that of kindness. Intellect, without heart, is infinitely cruel; as cruel as wealth without a sense of justice; as cruel as muscle without mercy. So that, after all, the real aristocracy must be that of goodness where the intellect is directed by the heart.

Question. You say that the aristocracy of intellect is quite as cruel as the aristocracy of wealth—what do you mean by that?

Answer. By intellect, I mean simply intellect; that is to say, the aristocracy of education—of simple brain—expressed in innumerable ways—in invention, painting, sculpture, literature. And I meant to say that that aristocracy was as cruel as that of simple arrogant wealth. After all, why should a man be proud of something given him by nature—something that he did not earn, did not produce—something that he could not help? Is it not more reasonable to be proud of wealth which you have accumulated than of brain which nature gave you? And, to carry this idea clearly out, why should we be proud of anything? Is there any proper occasion on which to crow? If you succeed, your success crows for you; if you fail, certainly crowing is not in

the best of taste. And why should a man be proud of brain? Why should he be proud of disposition or of good acts?

Question. You speak of the cruelty of the intellect, and yet, of course, you must recognize the right of every one to select his own companions. Would it be arrogant for the intellectual man to prefer the companionship of people of his own class in preference to commonplace and unintelligent persons?

Answer. All men should have the same rights, and one right that every man should have is to associate with congenial people. There are thousands of good men whose society I do not covet. They may be stupid, or they may be stupid only in the direction in which I am interested, and may be exceedingly intelligent as to matters about which I care nothing. In either case they are not congenial. They have the right to select congenial company; so have I. And while distinctions are thus made, they are not cruel; they are not heartless. They are for the good of all concerned, spring naturally from the circumstances, and are consistent with the highest philanthropy. Why we notice these distinctions in the church more than we do in the club is that the church talks one way and acts another; be-

cause the church insists that a certain line of conduct is essential to salvation, and that every human being is in danger of eternal pain. If the creed were true, then, in the presence of such an infinite verity, all earthly distinctions should instantly vanish. Every Christian should exert himself for the salvation of the soul of a beggar with the same degree of earnestness that he would show to save a king. The accidents of wealth, education, social position, should be esteemed as naught, and the richest should gladly work side by side with the poorest. The churches will never reach the poor as long as they sell pews; as long as the rich members wear their best clothes on Sunday. As long as the fashions of the drawing-room are taken to the table of the last supper, the poor will remain in the highways and hedges. Present fashion is more powerful than faith. So long as the ministers shut up their churches, and allow the poor to go to hell in summer; as long as they leave the devil without a competitor for three months in the year, the churches will not materially impede the march of human progress. People often, unconsciously and without any malice, say something or do something that throws an unexpected light upon a question. The other day, in one of the New York comic papers, there was a picture representing

the foremost preachers of the country at the seaside together. It was regarded as a joke that they could enjoy each other's society. These ministers are supposed to be the apostles of the religion of kindness. They tell us to love even our enemies, and yet the idea that they could associate happily together is regarded as a joke! After all, churches are like other institutions, they have to be managed, and they now rely upon music and upon elocution rather than upon the gospel. They are becoming social affairs. They are giving up the doctrine of eternal punishment, and have consequently lost their hold. The orthodox churches used to tell us there was to be a fire, and they offered to insure; and as long as the fire was expected the premiums were paid and the policies were issued. Then came the Universalist Church, saying that there would be no fire, and yet asking the people to insure. For such a church there is no basis. It undoubtedly did good by its influence upon other churches. So with the Unitarian. That church has no basis for organization; no reason, because no hell is threatened, and heaven is but faintly promised. Just as the churches have lost their belief in eternal fire, they have lost their influence, and the reason they have lost their belief is on account of the

diffusion of knowledge. That doctrine is becoming absurd and infamous. Intelligent people are ashamed to broach it. Intelligent people can no longer believe it. It is regarded with horror, and the churches must finally abandon it, and when they do, that is the end of the church militant.

Question. What do you say to the progress of the Roman Catholic Church, in view of the fact that they have not changed their belief, in any particular, in regard to future punishment?

Answer. Neither Catholicism nor Protestantism will ever win another battle. The last victory of Protestantism was won in Holland. Nations have not been converted since then. The time has passed to preach with sword and gun, and for that reason Catholicism can win no more victories. That church increases in this country mostly from immigration. Catholicism does not belong to the New World. It is at war with the idea of our Government, antagonistic to true republicanism, and is in every sense anti-American. The Catholic Church does not control its members. That church prevents no crime. It is not in favor of education. It is not the friend of liberty. In Europe it is now used as a political power, but here it dare not assert itself. There are

thousands of good Catholics. As a rule they probably believe the creed of the church. That church has lost the power to anathematize. It can no longer burn. It must now depend upon other forces —upon persuasion, sophistry, ignorance, fear, and heredity.

Question. You have stated your objections to the churches, what would you have to take their place?

Answer. There was a time when men had to meet together for the purpose of being told the law. This was before printing, and for hundreds and hundreds of years most people depended for their information on what they heard. The ear was the avenue to the brain. There was a time, of course, when Freemasonry was necessary, so that a man could carry, not only all over his own country, but to another, a certificate that he was a gentleman; that he was an honest man. There was a time, and it was necessary, for the people to assemble. They had no books, no papers, no way of reaching each other. But now all that is changed. The daily press gives you the happenings of the world. The libraries give you the thoughts of the greatest and best. Every man of moderate means can command the

principal sources of information. There is no necessity for going to the church and hearing the same story forever. Let the minister write what he wishes to say. Let him publish it. If it is worth buying, people will read it. It is hardly fair to get them in a church in the name of duty and there inflict upon them a sermon that under no circumstances they would read. Of course, there will always be meetings, occasions when people come together to exchange ideas, to hear what a man has to say upon some questions, but the idea of going fifty-two days in a year to hear anybody on the same subject is absurd.

Question. Would you include a man like Henry Ward Beecher in that statement?

Answer. Beecher is interesting just in proportion that he is not orthodox, and he is altogether more interesting when talking against his creed. He delivered a sermon the other day in Chicago, in which he takes the ground that Christianity is kindness, and that, consequently, no one could be an infidel. Every one believes in kindness, at least theoretically. In that sermon he throws away all creed, and comes to the conclusion that Christianity is a life, not an aggregation of intellectual convictions upon certain

subjects. The more sermons like that are preached, probably the better. What I intended was the eternal repetition of the old story: That God made the world and a man, and then allowed the devil to tempt him, and then thought of a scheme of salvation, of vicarious atonement, 1500 years afterwards; drowned everybody except Noah and his family, and afterward, when he failed to civilize the Jewish people, came in person and suffered death, and announced the doctrine that all who believed on him would be saved, and those who did not, eternally lost. Now, this story, with occasional references to the patriarchs and the New Jerusalem, and the exceeding heat of perdition, and the wonderful joys of Paradise, is the average sermon, and this story is told again, again, and again, by the same men, listened to by the same people without any effect except to tire the speaker and the hearer. If all the ministers would take their texts from Shakespeare; if they would read every Sunday a selection from some of the great plays, the result would be infinitely better. They would all learn something; the mind would be enlarged, and the sermon would appear short. Nothing has shown more clearly the intellectual barrenness of the pulpit than baccalaureate sermons lately delivered. The dignified dull-

ness, the solemn stupidity of these addresses has never been excelled. No question was met. The poor candidates for the ministry were given no new weapons. Armed with the theological flintlock of a century ago, they were ordered to do battle for doctrines older than their weapons. They were told to rely on prayer, to answer all arguments by keeping out of discussions, and to overwhelm the skeptic by ignoring the facts. There was a time when the Protestant clergy were in favor of education; that is to say, education enough to make a Catholic a Protestant, but not enough to make a Protestant a philosopher. The Catholics are also in favor of education enough to make a savage a Catholic, and there they stop. The Christian should never unsettle his belief. If he studies, if he reads, he is in danger. A new idea is a doubt; a doubt is the threshold of infidelity. The young ministers are warned against inquiry. They are educated like robins; they swallow whatever is thrown in the mouth, worms or shingle-nails, it makes no difference, and they are expected to get their revenge by treating their flocks precisely as the professors treated them. The creeds of the churches are being laughed at. Thousands of young men say nothing, because they do not wish to hurt the feelings of mothers and maiden aunts.

Thousands of business men say nothing, for fear it may interfere with trade. Politicians keep quiet for fear of losing influence. But when you get at the real opinions of people, a vast majority have outgrown the doctrines of orthodox Christianity. Some people think these things good for women and children, and use the Lord as an immense policeman to keep order. Every day ministers are uttering a declaration of independence. They are being examined by synods and committees of ministers, and they are beginning everywhere to say that they do not regard this life as a probationary stage; that the doctrine of eternal punishment is too bad; that the Bible is, in many things, foolish, absurd, and infamous; that it must have been written by men. And the people at large are beginning to find that the ministers have kept back the facts; have not told the history of the Bible; have not given to their congregations the latest advices, and so the feeling is becoming almost general that orthodox Christianity has outlived its usefulness. The church has a great deal to contend with. The scientific men are not religious. Geology laughs at Genesis, and astronomy has concluded that Joshua knew but very little of the motions of heavenly bodies. Statesmen do not approve of the laws of Moses;

the intellect of the world is on the other side. There is something besides preaching on Sunday. The newspaper is the rival of the pulpit. Nearly all the cars are running on that blessed day. Steamers take hundreds of thousands of excursionists. The man who has been at work all the week seeks the sight of the sea, and this has become so universal that the preacher is following his example. The flock has ceased to be afraid of the wolf, and the shepherd deserts the sheep. In a little while all the libraries will be open—all the museums. There will be music in the public parks; the opera, the theater. And what will churches do then? The cardinal points will be demonstrated to empty pews, unless the church is wise enough to meet the intellectual demands of the present.

Question. You speak as if the influences working against Christianity to-day will tend to crush it out of existence. Do you think that Christianity is any worse off now than it was during the French Revolution, when the priests were banished from the country and reason was worshiped; or in England, a hundred years ago, when Hume, Bolingbroke, and others made their attacks upon it?

Answer. You must remember that the French

Revolution was produced by Catholicism; that it was a reaction; that it went to infinite extremes; that it was a revolution seeking revenge. It is not hard to understand those times, provided you know the history of the Catholic Church. The seeds of the French Revolution were sown by priests and kings. The people had suffered the miseries of slavery for a thousand years, and the French Revolution came because human nature could bear the wrongs no longer. It was something not reasoned; it was felt. Only a few acted from intellectual convictions. The most were stung to madness, and were carried away with the desire to destroy. They wanted to shed blood, to tear down palaces, to cut throats, and in some way avenge the wrongs of all the centuries. Catholicism has never recovered—it never will. The dagger of Voltaire struck the heart; the wound was mortal. Catholicism has staggered from that day to this.

It has been losing power every moment. At the death of Voltaire there were twenty millions less Catholics than when he was born. In the French Revolution muscle outran mind; revenge anticipated reason. There was destruction without the genius of construction. They had to use materials that had been rendered worthless by ages of Catholicism.

The French Revolution was a failure because the French people were a failure, and the French people were a failure because Catholicism had made them so. The ministers attack Voltaire without reading him. Probably there are not a dozen orthodox ministers in the world who have read the works of Voltaire. I know of no one who has. Only a little while ago, a minister told me he had read Voltaire. I offered him one hundred dollars to repeat a paragraph, or to give the title, even, of one of Voltaire's volumes. Most ministers think he was an atheist. The trouble with the infidels in England a hundred years ago was that they did not go far enough. It may be that they could not have gone further and been allowed to live. Most of them took the ground that there was an infinite, all-wise, beneficent God, creator of the universe, and that this all-wise, beneficent God certainly was too good to be the author of the Bible. They, however, insisted that this good God was the author of nature, and the theologians completely turned the tables by showing that this god of nature was in the pestilence and plague business, manufactured earthquakes, overwhelmed towns and cities, and was, of necessity, the author of all pain and agony. In my judgment, the Deists were all successfully answered. The god

of nature is certainly as bad as the God of the Old Testament. It is only when we discard the idea of a deity, the idea of cruelty or goodness in nature, that we are able ever to bear with patience the ills of life. I feel that I am neither a favorite nor a victim. Nature neither loves nor hates me. I do not believe in the existence of any personal god. I regard the universe as the one fact, as the one existence—that is, as the absolute thing. I am a part of this. I do not say that there is no God; I simply say that I do not believe there is. There may be millions of them. Neither do I say that man is not immortal. Upon that point I admit that I do not know, and the declarations of all the priests in the world upon that subject give me no light, and do not even tend to add to my information on the subject, because I know that they know that they do not know. The infidelity of a hundred years ago knew nothing, comparatively speaking, of geology; nothing of astronomy; nothing of the ideas of Lamarck and Darwin; nothing of evolution; nothing, comparatively speaking, of other religions; nothing of India, that womb of metaphysics; in other words, the infidels of a hundred years ago knew the creed of orthodox Christianity to be false, but had not the facts to demonstrate it. The infidels of to-day have

the facts; that is the difference. A hundred years ago it was a guessing prophecy; to-day it is the fact and fulfillment. Everything in nature is working against superstition to-day. Superstition is like a thorn in the flesh, and everything, from dust to stars, is working together to destroy the false. The smallest pebble answers the greatest parson. One blade of grass, rightly understood, destroys the orthodox creed.

Question. You say that the pews will be empty in the future unless the church meets the intellectual demands of the present. Are not the ministers of to-day, generally speaking, much more intellectual than those of a hundred years ago, and are not the "liberal" views in regard to the inspiration of the Bible, the atonement, future punishment, the fall of man, and the personal divinity of Christ which openly prevail in many churches, an indication that the church is meeting the demands of many people who do not care to be classed as out-and-out disbelievers in Christianity, but who have advanced views on those and other questions?

Answer. As to the first part of this question, I do not think the ministers of to-day are more intellectual than they were a hundred years ago; that is, I do

not think they have greater brain capacity, but I think on the average, the congregations have a higher amount. The amelioration of orthodox Christianity is not by the intelligence in the pulpit, but by the brain in the pews. Another thing: One hundred years ago the church had intellectual honors to bestow. The pulpit opened a career. Not so now. There are too many avenues to distinction and wealth—too much worldliness. The best minds do not go into the pulpit. Martyrs had rather be burned than laughed at. Most ministers of to-day are not naturally adapted to other professions promising eminence. There are some great exceptions, but those exceptions are the ministers nearest infidels. Theodore Parker was a great man. Henry Ward Beecher is a great man—not the most consistent man in the world—but he is certainly a man of mark, a remarkable genius. If he could only get rid of the idea that Plymouth Church is necessary to him—after that time he would not utter an orthodox word. Chapin was a man of mind. I might mention some others, but, as a rule, the pulpit is not remarkable for intelligence. The intelligent men of the world do not believe in orthodox Christianity. It is to-day a symptom of intellectual decay. The conservative ministers are the stupid ones. The con-

servative professors are those upon whose ideas will be found the centuries' moss, old red sandstone theories, pre-historic silurian. Now, as to the second part of the question: The views of the church are changing, the clergy of Brooklyn to the contrary, notwithstanding. Orthodox religion is a kind of boa-constrictor; anything it can not dodge it will swallow. The church is bound to have something for sale that somebody wants to buy. According to the pew demand will be the pulpit supply. In old times the pulpit dictated to the pews. Things have changed. Theology is now run on business principles. The gentleman who pays for the theories insists on having them suit him. Ministers are intellectual gardeners, and they must supply the market with such religious vegetables as the congregations desire. Thousands have given up belief in the inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, the atonement idea and original sin. Millions believe now, that this is not a state of probation; that a man, provided he is well off and has given liberally to the church, or whose wife has been a regular attendant, will, in the next world, have another chance; that he will be permitted to file a motion for a new trial. Others think that hell is not as warm as it used to be supposed; that, while it is very hot in

the middle of the day, the nights are cool; and that, after all, there is not so much to fear from the future. They regard the old religion as very good for the poor, and they give them the old ideas on the same principle that they give them their old clothes. These ideas, out at the elbows, out at the knees, buttons off, somewhat raveled, will, after all, do very well for paupers. There is a great trade of this kind going on now—selling old theological clothes to the colored people in the South. All I have said applies to all churches. The Catholic Church changes every day. It does not change its ceremonies; but the spirit that begot the ceremonies, the spirit that clothed the skeleton of ceremony with the flesh and blood and throb of life and love, is gone. The spirit that built the cathedrals, the spirit that emptied the wealth of the world into the lap of Rome, has turned in another direction. Of course, the churches are all going to endeavor to meet the demands of the hour. They will find new readings for old texts. They will re-punctuate and re-parse the Old Testament. They will find that "flat" meant "a little rounding;" that "six days" meant "six long times;" that the word "flood" should have been translated "dampness," "dew," or "threatened rain;" that Daniel in the lion's den was an historical myth; that Samson

and his foxes had nothing to do with this world. All these things will be gradually explained and made to harmonize with the facts of modern science. They will not change the words of the creed; they will simply give "new meanings;" and the highest criticism to-day is that which confesses and avoids. In other words, the churches will change as the people change. They will keep for sale that which can be sold. Already the old goods are being "marked down." If, however, the church should fail, why then it must go. I see no reason, myself, for its existence. It apparently does no good; it devours without producing; it eats without planting, and is a perpetual burden. It teaches nothing of value. It misleads, mystifies, and misrepresents. It threatens without knowledge and promises without power. In my judgment, the quicker it goes the better for all mankind. But if it does not go in name, it must go in fact, because it must change; and, therefore, it is only a question of time when it ceases to divert from useful channels the blood and muscle of the world.

Question. You say that in the baccalaureate sermons delivered lately the theological students were told to answer arguments by keeping out of discussion. Is it not the fact that ministers have of late years

preached very largely on scientific disbelief, agnosticism, and infidelity, so much so as to lead to their being reprimanded by some of their more conservative brethren?

Answer. Of course there are hundreds of thousands of ministers perpetually endeavoring to answer infidelity. Their answers have done so much harm that the more conservative among the clergy have advised them to stop. Thousands have answered me, and their answers, for the most part, are like this: Paine was a blackguard, therefore the geology of Genesis is on a scientific basis. We know the doctrine of the atonement is true, because in the French Revolution they worshiped reason. And we know, too, all about the fall of man and the Garden of Eden because Voltaire was nearly frightened to death when he came to die. These are the usual arguments, supplemented by a few words concerning myself. And, in my view, they are the best that can be made. Failing to answer a man's argument, the next best thing is to attack his character. "You have no case," said an attorney to the plaintiff. "No matter," said the plaintiff, "I want you to give the defendant the devil."

Question. What have you to say to the Rev. Dr.

Baker's statement that he generally buys five or six tickets for your lectures and gives them to young men, who are shocked at the flippant way in which you are said to speak of the Bible?

Answer. Well, as to that, I have always wondered why I had such immense audiences in Brooklyn and New York. This tends to clear away the mystery. If all the clergy follow the example of Dr. Baker, that accounts for the number seeking admission. Of course, Dr. Baker would not misrepresent a thing like that, and I shall always feel greatly indebted to him, shall hereafter regard him as one of my agents, and take this occasion to return my thanks. He is certainly welcome to all the converts to Christianity made by hearing me. Still, I hardly think it honest in young men to play a game like that on the doctor.

Question. You speak of the eternal repetition of the old story of Christianity and say that the more sermons like the one Mr. Beecher preached lately the better. Is it not the fact that ministers, at the present time, do preach very largely on questions of purely moral, social, and humanitarian interest, so much so, indeed, as to provoke criticism on the part of the secular newspaper press?

Answer. I admit that there is a general tendency

in the pulpit to preach about things happening in this world; in other words, that the preachers themselves are beginning to be touched with worldliness. They find that the New Jerusalem has no particular interest for persons dealing in real estate in this world. And thousands of people are losing interest in Abraham, in David, Haggai, and take more interest in gentlemen who have the cheerful habit of living. They also find that their readers do not wish to be reminded perpetually of death and coffins and worms and dust and gravestones and shrouds and epitaphs and hearses, biers, and cheerful subjects of that character. That they prefer to hear the minister speak about a topic in which they have a present interest, and about which something cheerful can be said. In fact, it is a relief to hear about politics, a little about art, something about stocks or the crops, and most ministers find it necessary to advertise that they are going to speak on something that has happened within the last eighteen hundred years, and that, for the time being, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego will be left in the furnace. Of course, I think that most ministers are reasonably honest. Maybe they don't tell all their doubts, but undoubtedly they are endeavoring to make the world better, and most of the church members think that

they are doing the best that can be done. I am not criticising their motives, but their methods. I am not attacking the character or reputation of ministers, but simply giving my ideas, avoiding anything personal. I do not pretend to be very good, nor very bad—just fair to middling.

Question. You say that Christians will not read for fear that they will unsettle their belief. Father Fransiola (Roman Catholic) said in the interview I had with him: "If you do not allow man to reason you crush his manhood. Therefore, he has to reason upon the credibility of his faith, and through reason, guided by faith, he discovers the truth, and so satisfies his wants."

Answer. Without calling in question the perfect sincerity of Father Fransiola, I think his statement is exactly the wrong end to. I do not think that reason should be guided by faith; I think that faith should be guided by reason. After all, the highest possible conception of faith would be the science of probabilities, and the probable must not be based on what has not happened, but upon what has; not upon something we know nothing about, but the nature of the things with which we are acquainted. The foundation we must know something about, and whenever we reason, we must have something as a

basis, something secular, something that we think we know. About these facts we reason, sometimes by analogy, and we say thus and so has happened, therefore thus and so may happen. We do not say thus and so *may* happen, therefore something else *has* happened. We must reason from the known to the unknown, not from the unknown to the known. This Father admits that if you do not allow a man to reason you crush his manhood. At the same time he says faith must govern reason. Who makes the faith? The church. And the church tells the man that he must take the faith, reason or no reason, and that he may afterward reason, taking the faith as a fact. This makes him an intellectual slave, and the poor devil mistakes for liberty the right to examine his own chains. These gentlemen endeavor to satisfy their prisoners by insisting that there is nothing beyond the walls.

Question. You criticise the church for not encouraging the poor to mingle with the rich, and yet you defend the right of a man to choose his own company. Are not these same distinctions made by non-confessing Christians in real life, and will not there always be some greater, richer, wiser, than the rest?

Answer. I do not blame the church because there

are these distinctions based on wealth, intelligence, and culture. What I blame the church for is pretending to do away with these distinctions. These distinctions in men are inherent; differences in brain, in race, in blood, in education, and they are differences that will eternally exist—that is, as long as the human race exists. Some will be fortunate, some unfortunate, some generous, some stingy, some rich, some poor. What I wish to do away with is the contempt and scorn and hatred existing between rich and poor. I want the democracy of kindness—what you might call the republicanism of justice. I do not have to associate with a man to keep from robbing him. I can give him his rights without enjoying his company, and he can give me my rights without inviting me to dinner. Why should not poverty have rights? And has not honest poverty the right to hold dishonest wealth in contempt, and will it not do it, whether it belongs to the same church or not? We cannot judge men by their wealth, or by the position they hold in society. I like every kind man; I hate every cruel one. I like the generous, whether they are poor or rich, ignorant or cultivated. I like men that love their families, that are kind to their wives, gentle with their children, no matter whether they are millionaires or

mendicants. And to me the blossom of benevolence, of charity, is the fairest flower, no matter whether it blooms by the side of a hovel, or bursts from a vine climbing the marble pillar of a palace. I respect no man because he is rich; I hold in contempt no man because he is poor.

Question. Some of the clergymen say that the spread of infidelity is greatly exaggerated; that it makes more noise and creates more notice than conservative Christianity simply on account of its being outside of the accepted line of thought.

Answer. There was a time when an unbeliever, open and pronounced, was a wonder. At that time the church had great power; it could retaliate; it could destroy. The church abandoned the stake only when too many men objected to being burned. At that time infidelity was clad not simply in novelty, but often in fire. Of late years the thoughts of men have been turned, by virtue of modern discoveries, as the result of countless influences, to an investigation of the foundation of orthodox religion. Other religions were put in the crucible of criticism, and nothing was found but dross. At last it occurred to the intelligent to examine our own religion, and this examination has excited great interest and great comment. People want to hear, and they want to

hear because they have already about concluded themselves that the creeds are founded in error.

Thousands come to hear me because they are interested in the question, because they want to hear a man say what they think. They want to hear their own ideas from the lips of another. The tide has turned, and the spirit of investigation, the intelligence, the intellectual courage of the world is on the other side. A real good old-fashioned orthodox minister who believes the Thirty-nine articles with all his might, is regarded to-day as a theological mummy, a kind of corpse acted upon by the galvanic battery of faith, making strange motions, almost like those of life—not quite.

Question. How would you convey moral instruction from youth up, and what kind of instruction would you give?

Answer. I regard Christianity as a failure. Now, then, what is Christianity? I do not include in the word "Christianity" the average morality of the world or the morality taught in all systems of religion; that is, as distinctive Christianity. Christianity is this: A belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, the atonement, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, an eternal reward for the believers in Christ, and eternal punishment for the rest of us. Now,

take from Christianity its miracles, its absurdities of the atonement and fall of man and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and I have no objection to it as I understand it. I believe, in the main, in the Christianity which I suppose Christ taught, that is, in kindness, gentleness, forgiveness. I do not believe in loving enemies; I have pretty hard work to love my friends. Neither do I believe in revenge. No man can afford to keep the viper of revenge in his heart. But I believe in justice, in self-defence. Christianity—that is, the miraculous part—must be abandoned. As to morality—morality is born, is born of the instinct of self-preservation. If man could not suffer, the word "conscience" never would have passed his lips. Self-preservation makes larceny a crime. Murder will be regarded as a bad thing as long as a majority object to being murdered. Morality does not come from the clouds; it is born of human want and human experience. We need no inspiration, no inspired work. The industrious man knows that the idle has no right to rob him of the product of his labor, and the idle man knows that he has no right to do it. It is not wrong because we find it in the Bible, but I presume it was put in the Bible because it is wrong. Then, you find in the Bible other things upheld that are in-

famous. And why? Because the writers of the Bible were barbarians, in many things, and because that book is a mixture of good and evil. I see no trouble in teaching morality without miracle. I see no use of miracle. What can men do with it? Credulity is not a virtue. The credulous are not necessarily charitable. Wonder is not the mother of wisdom. I believe children should be taught to investigate and to reason for themselves, and that there are facts enough to furnish a foundation for all human virtue. We will take two families; in the one, the father and mother are both Christians, and they teach their children their creed; teach them that they are naturally totally depraved; that they can only hope for happiness in a future life by pleading the virtues of another, and that a certain belief is necessary to salvation; that God punishes his children forever. Such a home has a certain atmosphere. Take another family; the father and mother teach their children that they should be kind to each other because kindness produces happiness; that they should be gentle; that they should be just, because justice is the mother of joy. And suppose this father and mother say to their children: "If you are happy it must be as a result of your own actions; if you do wrong you must suffer the conse-

quences. No Christ can redeem you; no savior can suffer for you. You must suffer the consequences of your own misdeeds. If you plant you must reap, and you must reap what you plant." And suppose these parents also say: "You must find out the conditions of happiness. You must investigate the circumstances by which you are surrounded. You must ascertain the nature and relation of things so that you can act in accordance with known facts, to the end that you may have health and peace." In such a family, there would be a certain atmosphere, in my judgment, a thousand times better and purer and sweeter than in the other. The church generally teaches that rascality pays in this world, but not in the next; that here virtue is a losing game, but the dividends will be large in another world. They tell the people that they must serve God on credit, but the devil pays cash here. That is not my doctrine. My doctrine is that a thing is right because it pays, in the highest sense. That is the reason it is right. The reason a thing is wrong is because it is the mother of misery. Virtue has its reward here and now. It means health; it means intelligence, contentment, success. Vice means exactly the opposite. Most of us have more passion than judgment, carry more sail than ballast, and by the temp-

est of passion we are blown from port, we are wrecked and lost. We cannot be saved by faith or by belief. It is a slower process: We must be saved by knowledge, by intelligence—the only lever capable of raising mankind.

Question. The shorter catechism, Colonel, you may remember says "that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." What is your idea of the chief end of man?

Answer. It has always seemed a little curious to me that joy should be held in such contempt here, and yet promised hereafter as an eternal reward. Why not be happy here, as well as in heaven. Why not have joy here? Why not go to heaven now—that is, to-day? Why not enjoy the sunshine of this world, and all there is of good in it? It is bad enough; so bad that I do not believe it was ever created by a beneficent deity; but what little good there is in it, why not have it? Neither do I believe that it is the end of man to glorify God. How can the Infinite be glorified? Does he wish for reputation? He has no equals, no superiors. How can he have what we call reputation? How can he achieve what we call glory? Why should he wish the flattery of the average Presbyterian? What good will it do him

to know that his course has been approved of by the Methodist Episcopal Church? What does he care, even, for the religious weeklies, or the presidents of religious colleges? I do not see how we can help God, or hurt him. If there be an infinite Being, certainly nothing we can do can in any way affect him. We can affect each other, and therefore man should be careful not to sin against man. For that reason I have said a hundred times, injustice is the only blasphemy. If there be a heaven I want to associate there with the ones who have loved me here. I might not like the angels and the angels might not like me. I want to find old friends. I do not care to associate with the Infinite; there could be no freedom in such society. I suppose I am not spiritual enough, and am somewhat touched with worldliness. It seems to me that everybody ought to be honest enough to say about the Infinite "I know nothing;" of eternal joy, "I have no conception;" about another world, "I know nothing." At the same time, I am not attacking anybody for believing in immortality. The more a man can hope, and the less he can fear, the better. I have done what I could to drive from the human heart the shadow of eternal pain. I want to put out the fires of an ignorant and revengeful hell.

LIMITATIONS OF TOLERATION.

THE LIMITATIONS OF TOLERATION.*

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S OPENING.

Ladies, Mr. President and Gentlemen:

I AM here to-night for the purpose of defending your right to differ with me. I want to convince you that you are under no compulsion to accept my creed; that you are, so far as I am concerned, absolutely free to follow the torch of your reason according to your conscience; and I believe that you are

* A discussion between Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, Hon. Frederic R. Coudert, Ex-Gov. Stewart L. Woodford, before the Nineteenth Century Club of New York, at the Metropolitan Opera House, May 8, 1888. The points for discussion, as submitted in advance, were the following propositions:

First. Thought is a necessary natural product—the result of what is called impressions made through the medium of the senses upon the brain, not forgetting the fact of heredity.

Second. No human being is accountable to any being—human or divine—for his thoughts.

Third. Human beings have a certain interest in the thoughts of each other, and one who undertakes to tell his thoughts should be honest.

Fourth. All have an equal right to express their thoughts upon all subjects.

Fifth. For one man to say to another, "I tolerate you," is an assumption of authority—not a disclaimer, but a waiver, of the right to persecute.

Sixth. Each man has the same right to express to the whole world his ideas, that the rest of the world have to express their thoughts to him.

Courtlandt Palmer, Esq., President of the Club, in introducing Mr. Ingersoll, among other things said:

"The inspiration of the orator of the evening seems to be that of the great Victor Hugo, who uttered the august saying, 'There shall be no slavery of the mind.'

"When I was in Paris, about a year ago, I visited the tomb of Victor Hugo. It was placed in a recess in the crypt of the Pantheon. Opposite it was the tomb of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Near by, in another recess, was the memorial statue of Voltaire; and I felt, as I looked at these three monuments, that had Colonel Ingersoll been born in France, and had he passed in his long life account, the acclaim of the liberal culture of France would have enlarged that trio into a quartette.

"Colonel Ingersoll has appeared in several important debates in print, notably with Judge Jeremiah S. Black, formerly Attorney-General of the United States; lately in the pages of *The North American Review* with the Rev. Dr. Henry M. Field, and last but not least the Right Hon. William E Gladstone, England's greatest citizen, has taken up the cudgel against him in behalf of his view of Orthodoxy. To-night, I believe for the first time, the colonel has consented to appear in a colloquial discussion. I have now the honor to introduce this distinguished orator."

civilized to that degree that you will extend to me the right that you claim for yourselves.

I admit, at the very threshold, that every human being thinks as he must; and the first proposition really is, whether man has the right to think. It will bear but little discussion, for the reason that no man can control his thought. If you think you can, what are you going to think to-morrow? What are you going to think next year? If you can absolutely control your thought, can you stop thinking?

The question is, Has the will any power over the thought? What is thought? It is the result of nature—of the outer world—first upon the senses—those impressions left upon the brain as pictures of things in the outward world, and these pictures are transformed into, or produce, thought; and as long as the doors of the senses are open, thoughts will be produced. Whoever looks at anything in nature, thinks. Whoever hears any sound—or any symphony—no matter what—thinks. Whoever looks upon the sea, or on a star, or on a flower, or on the face of a fellow-man, thinks, and the result of that look is an absolute necessity. The thought produced will depend upon your brain, upon your experience, upon the history of your life.

One who looks upon the sea, knowing that the one he loved the best had been devoured by its hungry waves, will have certain thoughts; and he who sees it for the first time, will have different thoughts. In other words, no two brains are alike; no two lives have been or are or ever will be the same. Consequently, nature cannot produce the same effect upon any two brains, or upon any two hearts.

The only reason why we wish to exchange thoughts is that we are different. If we were all the same, we would die dumb. No thought would be expressed after we found that our thoughts were precisely alike. We differ—our thoughts are different. Therefore the commerce that we call conversation.

Back of language is thought. Back of language is the desire to express our thought to another. This desire not only gave us language—this desire has given us the libraries of the world. And not only the libraries; this desire to express thought, to show to others the splendid children of the brain, has written every book, formed every language, painted every picture, and chiseled every statue—this desire to express our thought to others, to reap the harvest of the brain.

If, then, thought is a necessity, "it follows as the night the day" that there is, there can be, no responsibility for thought to any being, human or divine.

A camera contains a sensitive plate. The light flashes upon it, and the sensitive plate receives a picture. Is it in fault, is it responsible, for the picture? So with the brain. An image is left on it, a picture is imprinted there. The plate may not be perfectly level—it may be too concave, or too convex, and the picture may be a deformity; so with the brain. But the man does not make his own brain, and the consequence is, if the picture is distorted it is not the fault of the brain.

We take then these two steps: first, thought is a necessity; and second, the thought depends upon the brain.

Each brain is a kind of field where nature sows with careless hands the seeds of thought. Some brains are poor and barren fields, producing weeds and thorns, and some are like the tropic world where grow the palm and pine—children of the sun and soil.

You read Shakespeare. What do you get out of Shakespeare? All that your brain is able to hold. It depends upon your brain. If you are great—if you have been cultivated—if the wings of

your imagination have been spread—if you have had great, free, and splendid thoughts—if you have stood upon the edge of things—if you have had the courage to meet all that can come—you get an immensity from Shakespeare. If you have lived nobly—if you have loved with every drop of your blood and every fibre of your being—if you have suffered—if you have enjoyed—then you get an immensity from Shakespeare. But if you have lived a poor, little, mean, wasted, barren, weedy life —you get very little from that immortal man.

So it is from every source in nature—what you get depends upon what you are.

Take then the second step. If thought is a necessity, there can be no responsibility for thought. And why has man ever believed that his fellow-man was responsible for his thought?

Everything that is, everything that has been, has been naturally produced. Man has acted as, under the same circumstances, we would have acted; because when you say "under the circumstances," it is the same as to say that you would do exactly as they have done.

There has always been in men the instinct of self-preservation. There was a time when men believed, and honestly believed, that there was above them a

God. Sometimes they believed in many, but it will be sufficient for my illustration to say, one. Man believed that there was in the sky above him a God who attended to the affairs of men. He believed that that God, sitting upon his throne, rewarded virtue and punished vice. He believed also, that that God held the community responsible for the sins of individuals. He honestly believed it. When the flood came, or when the earthquake devoured, he really believed that some God was filled with anger—with holy indignation—at his children. He believed it, and so he looked about among his neighbors to see who was in fault, and if there was any man who had failed to bring his sacrifice to the altar, had failed to kneel, it may be to the priest, failed to be present in the temple, or had given it as his opinion that the God of that tribe or of that nation was of no use, then, in order to placate the God, they seized the neighbor and sacrificed him on the altar of their ignorance and of their fear.

They believed when the lightning leaped from the cloud and left its blackened mark upon the man, that he had done something—that he had excited the wrath of the gods.

And while man so believed, while he believed that it was necessary, in order to defend himself, to

kill his neighbor—he acted simply according to the dictates of his nature.

What I claim is that we have now advanced far enough not only to think, but to know, that the conduct of man has nothing to do with the phenomena of nature. We are now advanced far enough to absolutely know that no man can be bad enough and no nation infamous enough to cause an earthquake. I think we have got to that point that we absolutely know that no man can be wicked enough to entice one of the bolts from heaven—that no man can be cruel enough to cause a drought—and that you could not have infidels enough on the earth to cause another flood. I think we have advanced far enough not only to say that, but to absolutely know it—I mean people who have thought, and in whose minds there is something like reasoning.

We know, if we know anything, that the lightning is just as apt to hit a good man as a bad man. We know it. We know that the earthquake is just as liable to swallow virtue as to swallow vice. And you know just as well as I do that a ship loaded with pirates is just as apt to outride the storm as one crowded with missionaries. You know it.

I am now speaking of the phenomena of nature. I believe, as much as I believe that I live, that the

reason a thing is right is because it tends to the happiness of mankind. I believe, as much as I believe that I live, that on the average the good man is not only the happier man, but that no man is happy who is not good.

If then we have gotten over that frightful, that awful superstition—we are ready to enjoy hearing the thoughts of each other.

I do not say, neither do I intend to be understood as saying, that there is no God. All I intend to say is, that so far as we can see, no man is punished, no nation is punished by lightning, or famine, or storm. Everything happens to the one as to the other.

Now, let us admit that there is an infinite God. That has nothing to do with the sinlessness of thought—nothing to do with the fact that no man is accountable to any being, human or divine, for what he thinks. And let me tell you why.

If there be an infinite God, leave him to deal with men who sin against him. You can trust him, if you believe in him. He has the power. He has a heaven full of bolts. Trust him. And now that you are satisfied that the earthquake will not swallow you, or the lightning strike you, simply because you tell your thoughts, if one of your neighbors differs with

you, and acts improperly or thinks or speaks improperly of your God, leave him with your God—he can attend to him a thousand times better than you can. He has the time. He lives from eternity to eternity. More than that, he has the means. So that, whether there be this Being or not, you have no right to interfere with your neighbor.

The next proposition is, that I have the same right to express my thought to the whole world, that the whole world has to express its thought to me.

I believe that this realm of thought is not a democracy, where the majority rule; it is not a republic. It is a country with one inhabitant. This brain is the world in which my mind lives, and my mind is the sovereign of that realm. We are all kings, and one man balances the rest of the world as one drop of water balances the sea. Each soul is crowned. Each soul wears the purple and the tiara; and only those are good citizens of the intellectual world who give to every other human being every right that they claim for themselves, and only those are traitors in the great realm of thought who abandon reason and appeal to force.

If now I have got out of your minds the idea that you must abuse your neighbors to keep on good

terms with God, then the question of religion is exactly like every question—I mean of thought, of mind—I have nothing to say now about action.

Is there authority in the world of art? Can a legislature pass a law that a certain picture is beautiful, and can it pass a law putting in the penitentiary any impudent artistic wretch who says that to him it is not beautiful? Precisely the same with music. Our ears are not all the same; we are not touched by the same sounds—the same beautiful memories do not arise. Suppose you have an authority in music? You may make men, it may be, by offering them office or by threatening them with punishment, swear that they all like that tune—but you never will know till the day of your death whether they do or not. The moment you introduce a despotism in the world of thought, you succeed in making hypocrites—and you get in such a position that you never know what your neighbor thinks.

So in the great realm of religion, there can be no force. No one can be compelled to pray. No matter how you tie him down, or crush him down on his face or on his knees, it is above the power of the human race to put in that man, by force, the spirit of prayer. You cannot do it. Neither can you com-

pel anybody to worship a God. Worship rises from the heart like perfume from a flower. It cannot obey; it cannot do that which some one else commands. It must be absolutely true to the law of its own nature. And do you think any God would be satisfied with compulsory worship? Would he like to see long rows of poor, ignorant slaves on their terrified knees repeating words without a soul—giving him what you might call the shucks of sound? Will any God be satisfied with that? And so I say, we must be as free in one department of thought as another.

Now, I take the next step, and that is, that the rights of all are absolutely equal.

I have the same right to give you my opinion that you have to give me yours. I have no right to compel you to hear, if you do not want to. I have no right to compel you to speak if you do not want to. If you do not wish to know my thought, I have no right to force it upon you.

The next thing is, that this liberty of thought, this liberty of expression, is of more value than any other thing beneath the stars. Of more value than any religion, of more value than any government, of more value than all the constitutions that man has written and all the laws that he has passed, is this

liberty—the absolute liberty of the human mind. Take away that word from language, and all other words become meaningless sounds, and there is then no reason for a man being and living upon the earth.

So then, I am simply in favor of intellectual hospitality—that is all. You come to me with a new idea. I invite you into the house. Let us see what you have. Let us talk it over. If I do not like your thought, I will bid it a polite "good day." If I do like it, I will say: "Sit down; stay with me, and become a part of the intellectual wealth of my world." That is all.

And how any human being ever has had the impudence to speak against the right to speak, is beyond the power of my imagination. Here is a man who speaks—who exercises a right that he, by his speech, denies. Can liberty go further than that? Is there any toleration possible beyond the liberty to speak against liberty—the real believer in free speech allowing others to speak against the right to speak? Is there any limitation beyond that?

So, whoever has spoken against the right to speak has admitted that he violated his own doctrine. No man can open his mouth against the freedom of speech without denying every argument he may put

forward. Why? He is exercising the right that he denies. How did he get it? Suppose there is one man on an island. You will all admit now that he would have the right to do his own thinking. You will all admit that he has the right to express his thought. Now, will somebody tell me how many men would have to emigrate to that island before the original settler would lose his right to think and his right to express himself?

If there be an infinite Being—and it is a question that I know nothing about—you would be perfectly astonished to know how little I do know on that subject, and yet I know as much as the aggregated world knows, and as little as the smallest insect that ever fanned with happy wings the summer air—if there be such a Being, I have the same right to think that he has, simply because it is a necessity of my nature—because I cannot help it. And the Infinite would be just as responsible to the smallest intelligence living in the infinite spaces—he would be just as responsible to that intelligence as that intelligence can be to him, provided that intelligence thinks as a necessity of his nature.

There is another phrase to which I object—"toleration." "The limits of toleration." Why say "toleration"? I will tell you why. When the thinkers

were in the minority—when the philosophers were vagabonds—when the men with brains furnished fuel for bonfires—when the majority were ignorantly orthodox—when they hated the heretic as a last year's leaf hates a this year's bud—in that delightful time these poor people in the minority had to say to ignorant power, to conscientious rascality, to cruelty born of universal love: "Don't kill us; don't be so arrogantly meek as to burn us; tolerate us." At that time the minority was too small to talk about rights, and the great big ignorant majority when tired of shedding blood, said: "Well, we will tolerate you; we can afford to wait; you will not live long, and when the Being of infinite compassion gets hold of you we will glut our revenge through an eternity of joy; we will ask you every now and then, 'What is your opinion now?'"

Both feeling absolutely sure that infinite goodness would have his revenge, they "tolerated" these thinkers, and that word finally took the place almost of liberty. But I do not like it. When you say "I tolerate," you do not say you have no right to punish, no right to persecute. It is only a disclaimer for a few moments and for a few years, but you retain the right. I deny it.

And let me say here to-night—it is your experi-

ence; it is mine—that the bigger a man is the more charitable he is; you know it. The more brain he has, the more excuses he finds for all the world; you know it. And if there be in heaven an infinite Being, he must be grander than any man; he must have a thousand times more charity than the human heart can hold, and is it possible that he is going to hold his ignorant children responsible for the impressions made by nature upon their brain? Let us have some sense.

There is another side to this question, and that is with regard to the freedom of thought and expression in matters pertaining to this world.

No man has a right to hurt the character of a neighbor. He has no right to utter slander. He has no right to bear false witness. He has no right to be actuated by any motive except for the general good—but the things he does here to his neighbor —these are easily defined and easily punished. All that I object to is setting up a standard of authority in the world of art, the world of beauty, the world of poetry, the world of worship, the world of religion, and the world of metaphysics. That is what I object to; and if the old doctrines had been carried out, every human being that has benefited this world would have been destroyed. If the people who be-

lieve that a certain belief is necessary to insure salvation had had control of this world, we would have been as ignorant to-night as wild beasts. Every step in advance has been made in spite of them. There has not been a book of any value printed since the invention of that art—and when I say "of value," I mean that contained new and splendid truths—that was not anathematized by the gentlemen who believed that man is responsible for his thought. Every step has been taken in spite of that doctrine.

Consequently I simply believe in absolute liberty of mind. And I have no fear about any other world —not the slightest. When I get there, I will give my honest opinion of that country; I will give my honest thought there; and if for that I lose my soul, I will keep at least my self-respect.

A man tells me a story. I believe it, or disbelieve it. I cannot help it. I read a story—no matter whether in the original Hebrew, or whether it has been translated. I believe it or I disbelieve it. No matter whether it is written in a very solemn or a very flippant manner—I have my idea about its truth. And I insist that each man has the right to judge that for himself, and for that reason, as I have already said, I am defending your right to differ with

me—that is all. And if you do differ with me, all that it proves is that I do not agree with you. There is no man that lives to-night beneath the stars—there is no being—that can force my soul upon its knees, unless the reason is given. I will be no slave. I do not care how big my master is, I am just as small, if a slave, as though the master were small. It is not the greatness of the master that can honor the slave. In other words, I am going to act according to my right, as I understand it, without interfering with any other human being. And now, if you think—any of you, that you can control your thought, I want you to try it. There is not one here who can by any possibility think, only as he must.

You remember the story of the Methodist minister who insisted that he could control his thoughts. A man said to him, "Nobody can control his own mind." "Oh, yes, he can," the preacher replied. "My dear sir," said the man, "you cannot even say the Lord's Prayer without thinking of something else." "Oh, yes, I can." "Well, if you will do it, I will give you that horse, the best riding horse in this county." "Well, who is to judge?" said the preacher. "I will take your own word for it, and if you say the Lord's Prayer through without thinking of anything else, I will give

you that horse." So the minister shut his eyes and began: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,"— "I suppose you will throw in the saddle and bridle?"

I say to you to-night, ladies and gentlemen, that I feel more interest in the freedom of thought and speech than in all other questions, knowing, as I do, that it is the condition of great and splendid progress for the race; remembering, as I do, that the opposite idea has covered the cheek of the world with tears; remembering, and knowing, as I do, that the enemies of free thought and free speech have covered this world with blood. These men have filled the heavens with an infinite monster; they have filled the future with fire and flame, and they have made the present, when they have had the power, a perdition. These men, these doctrines, have carried fagots to the feet of philosophy. These men, these doctrines, have hated to see the dawn of an intellectual day. These men, these doctrines, have denied every science, and denounced and killed every philosopher they could lay their bloody, cruel, ignorant hands upon.

And for that reason, I am for absolute liberty of thought, everywhere, in every department, domain, and realm of the human mind.

REMARKS OF MR. COUDERT.

Ladies and Gentlemen and Mr. President: It is not only "the sense of the church" that I am lacking now, I am afraid it is any sense at all; and I am only wondering how a reasonably intelligent being —meaning myself—could in view of the misfortune that befell Mr. Kernan, have undertaken to speak to-night.

This is a new experience. I have never sung in any of Verdi's operas—I have never listened to one through—but I think I would prefer to try all three of these performances rather than go on with this duty which, in a vain moment of deluded vanity, I heedlessly undertook.

I am in a new field here. I feel very much like the master of a ship who thinks that he can safely guide his bark. (I am not alluding to the traditional bark of St. Peter, in which I hope that I am and will always be, but the ordinary bark that requires a compass and a rudder and a guide.) And I find that all these ordinary things, which we generally take for granted, and which are as necessary to our safety as the

air which we breathe, or the sunshine that we enjoy, have been quietly, pleasantly, and smilingly thrown overboard by the gentleman who has just preceded me.

Carlyle once said—and the thought came to me as the gentlman was speaking—"A Comic History of England!"—for some wretch had just written such a book—(talk of free thought and free speech when men do such things!)—"A Comic History of England!" The next thing we shall hear of will be "A Comic History of the Bible!" I think we have heard the first chapter of that comic history to-night; and the only comfort that I have—and possibly some other antiquated and superannuated persons of either sex, if such there be within my hearing—is that such things as have seemed to me charmingly to partake of the order of blasphemy, have been uttered with such charming bonhomie, and received with such enthusiastic admiration, that I have wondered whether we are in a Christian audience of the nineteenth century, or in a possible Ingersollian audience of the twenty-third.

And let me first, before I enter upon the very few and desultory remarks, which are the only ones that I can make now and with which I may claim your polite attention—let me say a word about the com-

parison with which your worthy President opened these proceedings.

There are two or three things upon which I am a little sensitive: One, aspersions upon the land of my birth—the city of New York; the next, the land of my fathers; and the next, the bark that I was just speaking of.

Now your worthy President, in his well-meant efforts to exhibit in the best possible style the new actor upon his stage, said that he had seen Victor Hugo's remains, and Voltaire's, and Jean Jacques Rousseau's, and that he thought the niche might well be filled by Colonel Ingersoll. If that had been merely the expression of a natural desire to see him speedily annihilated, I might perhaps in the interests of the Christian community have *thought*, but not *said*, "Amen!" (Here you will at once observe the distinction I make between free thought and free speech!)

I do not think, and I beg that none of you, and particularly the eloquent rhetorician who preceded me, will think, that in anything I may say I intend any personal discourtesy, for I do believe to some extent in freedom of speech upon a platform like this. Such a debate as this rises entirely above and beyond the plane of personalities.

I suppose that your President intended to compare Colonel Ingersoll to Voltaire, to Hugo and to Rousseau. I have no retainer from either of those gentlemen, but for the reason that I just gave you, I wish to defend their memory from what I consider a great wrong. And so I do not think—with all respect to the eloquent and learned gentleman—that he is entitled to a place in that niche. Voltaire did many wrong things. He did them for many reasons, and chiefly because he was human. But Voltaire did a great deal to build up. Leaving aside his noble tragedies, which charmed and delighted his audiences, and dignified the stage, throughout his work was some effort to ameliorate the condition of the human race. He fought against torture; he fought against persecution; he fought against bigotry; he clamored and wrote against littleness and fanaticism in every way, and he was not ashamed when he entered upon his domains at Fernay, to erect a church to the God of whom the most our friend can say is, "I do not know whether he exists or not."

Rousseau did many noble things, but he was a madman, and in our day would probably have been locked up in an asylum and treated by intelligent doctors. His works, however, bear the impress of a

religious education, and if there be in his works or sayings anything to parallel what we have heard to-night—whether a parody on divine revelation, or a parody upon the prayer of prayers—I have not seen it.

Victor Hugo has enriched the literature of his day with prose and poetry that have made him the Shakespeare of the nineteenth century—poems as deeply imbued with a devout sense of responsibility to the Almighty as the writings of an archbishop or a cardinal. He has left the traces of his beneficent action all over the literature of his day, of his country, and of his race.

All these men, then, have built up something. Will anyone, the most ardent admirer of Colonel Ingersoll, tell me what he has built up?

To go now to the argument. The learned gentleman says that freedom of thought is a grand thing. Unfortunately, freedom of thought exists. What one of us would not put manacles and fetters upon his thoughts, if he only could? What persecution have any of us suffered to compare with the involuntary recurrence of these demons that enter our brain—that bring back past events that we would wipe out with our tears, or even with our blood—and make us slaves of a power unseen but uncon-

The dynamite man may say to me, "I give you full liberty to build and occupy and insure, if you will give me liberty to blow up." Is that a fair bargain? Am I bound in conscience and in good sense to accept it? Liberty of speech! Tell me where liberty of speech has ever existed. There have been free societies. England was a free country. France has struggled through crisis after crisis to obtain liberty of speech. We think we have liberty of speech, as we understand it, and yet who would undertake to say that our society could live with liberty of speech? We have gone through many crises in our short history, and we know that *thought* is nothing before the law, but the *word* is an *act*—as guilty at times as the act of killing, or burglary, or any of the violent crimes that disgrace humanity and require the police.

A word is an act—an act of the tongue; and why should my tongue go unpunished, and I who wield it mercilessly toward those who are weaker than I, escape, if my arm is to be punished when I use it tyrannously? Whom would you punish for the murder of Desdemona—is it Iago, or Othello? Who was the villain, who was the criminal, who deserved the scaffold—who but free speech? Iago exercised free speech. He poisoned the ear of

Othello and nerved his arm and Othello was the murderer—but Iago went scot free. That was a *word.*

"Oh," says the counsel, "but that does not apply to individuals; be tender and charitable to individuals." Tender and charitable to men if they endeavor to destroy all that you love and venerate and respect!

Are you tender and charitable to me if you enter my house, my castle, and debauch my children from the faith that they have been taught? Are you tender and charitable to them and to me when you teach them that I have instructed them in falsehood, that their mother has rocked them in blasphemy, and that they are now among the fools and the witlings of the world because they believe in my precepts? Is that the charity that you speak of? Heaven forbid that liberty of speech such as that, should ever invade my home or yours!

We all understand, and the learned gentleman will admit, that his discourse is but an eloquent apology for blasphemy. And when I say this, I beg you to believe me incapable of resorting to the cheap artifice of strong words to give point to a pointless argument, or to offend a courteous adversary. I think if I put it to him he would, with

characteristic candor, say, "Yes, that is what I claim —the liberty to blaspheme; the world has outgrown these things; and I claim to-day, as I claimed a few months ago in the neighboring gallant little State of New Jersey, that while you cannot slander man, your tongue is free to revile and insult man's maker." New Jersey was behind in the race for progress, and did not accept his argument. His unfortunate client was convicted and had to pay the fine which the press—which is seldom mistaken—says came from the pocket of his generous counsel.

The argument was a strong one; the argument was brilliant, and was able; and I say now, with all my predilections for the church of my fathers, and for your church (because it is not a question of our differences, but it is a question whether the tree shall be torn up by the roots, not what branches may bear richer fruit or deserve to be lopped off)—I say, why has every Christian State passed these statutes against blasphemy? Turning into ridicule sacred things—firing off the Lord's Prayer as you would a joke from Joe Miller or a comic poem—that is what I mean by blasphemy. If there is any other or better definition, give it me, and I will use it.

Now understand. All these States of ours care not one fig what our religion is. Behave your-

selves properly, obey the laws, do not require the intervention of the police, and the majesty of your conscience will be as exalted as the sun. But the wisest men and the best men —possibly not so eloquent as the orator, but I may say it without offence to him—other names that shine brightly in the galaxy of our best men, have insisted and maintained that the Christian faith was the ligament that kept our modern society together, and our laws have said, and the laws of most of our States say, to this day, "Think what you like, but do not, like Samson, pull the pillars down upon us all."

If I had anything to say, ladies and gentlemen, it is time that I should say it now. My exordium has been very long, but it was no longer than the dignity of the subject, perhaps, demanded.

Free speech we all have. Absolute liberty of speech we never had. Did we have it before the war? Many of us here remember that if you crossed an imaginary line and went among some of the noblest and best men that ever adorned this continent, one word against slavery meant death. And if you say that that was the influence of slavery, I will carry you to Boston, that city which numbers within its walls as many intelligent people to the acre as any city on the globe—was it different there?

Why, the fugitive, beaten, blood-stained slave, when he got there, was seized and turned back; and when a few good and brave men, in defence of free speech, undertook to defend the slave and to try and give him liberty, they were mobbed and pelted and driven through the city. You may say, "That proves there was no liberty of speech." No; it proves this: that wherever, and wheresoever, and whenever, liberty of speech is incompatible with the safety of the State, liberty of speech must fall back and give way, in order that the State may be preserved.

First, above everything, above all things, the safety of the people is the supreme law. And if rhetoricians, anxious to tear down, anxious to pluck the faith from the young ones who are unable to defend it, come forward with nickel-plated platitudes and commonplaces clothed in second-hand purple and tinsel, and try to tear down the temple, then it is time, I shall not say for good men—for I know so few they make a small battalion—but for good women, to come to the rescue.

GENERAL WOODFORD'S SPEECH.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: At this late hour, I could not attempt—even if I would—the eloquence of my friend Colonel Ingersoll; nor the wit and rapier-like sarcasm of my other valued friend Mr. Coudert. But there are some things so serious about this subject that we discuss to-night, that I crave your pardon if, without preface, and without rhetoric, I get at once to what from my Protestant standpoint seems the fatal logical error of Mr. Ingersoll's position.

Mr. Ingersoll starts with the statement—and that I may not, for I could not, do him injustice, nor myself injustice, in the quotation, I will give it as he stated it—he starts with this statement: that thought is a necessary natural product, the result of what we call impressions made through the medium of the senses upon the brain.

Do you think that is thought? Now stop—turn right into your own minds—is that thought? Does not will power take hold? Does not reason take

hold? Does not memory take hold, and is not thought the action of the brain based upon the impression and assisted or directed by manifold and varying influences?

Secondly, our friend Mr. Ingersoll says that no human being is accountable to any being, human or divine, for his thought.

He starts with the assumption that thought is the inevitable impression burnt upon the mind at once, and then jumps to the conclusion that there is no responsibility. Now, is not that a fair logical analysis of what he has said?

My senses leave upon my mind an impression, and then my mind, out of that impression, works good or evil. The glass of brandy, being presented to my physical sense, inspires thirst—inspires the thought of thirst—inspires the instinct of debauchery. Am I not accountable for the result of the mind given me, whether I yield to the debauch, or rise to the dignity of self-control?

Every thing of sense leaves its impression upon the mind. If there be no responsibility anywhere, then is this world blind chance. If there be no responsibility anywhere, then my friend deserves no credit if he be guiding you in the path of truth, and I deserve no censure if I be carrying you back into

the path of superstition. Why, admit for a moment that a man has no control over his thought, and you destroy absolutely the power of regenerating the world, the power of improving the world. The world swings one way, or it swings the other. If it be true that in all these ages we have come nearer and nearer to a perfect liberty, that is true simply and alone because the mind of man through reason, through memory, through a thousand inspirations and desires and hopes, has ever tended toward better results and higher achievements.

No accountability? I speak not for my friend, but I recognize that I am accountable to myself; I recognize that whether I rise or fall, that whether my life goes upward or downward, I am responsible to myself. And so, in spite of all sophistry, so in spite of all dream, so in spite of all eloquence, each woman, each man within this audience is responsible —first of all to herself and himself—whether when bad thoughts, when passion, when murder, when evil come into the heart or brain he harbors them there or he casts them out.

I am responsible further—I am responsible to my neighbor. I know that I am my neighbor's keeper, I know that as I touch your life, as you touch mine, I am responsible every moment, every hour, every

day, for my influence upon you. I am either helping you up, or I am dragging you down ; you are either helping me up or you are dragging me down—and you know it. Sophistry cannot get away from this ; eloquence cannot seduce us from it. You know that if you look back through the record of your life, there are lives that you have helped and lives that you have hurt. You know that there are lives on the downward plane that went down because in an evil hour you pushed them ; you know, perhaps with blessing, lives that have gone up because you have reached out to them a helping hand. That responsibility for your neighbor is a responsibility and an accountability that you and I cannot avoid or evade.

I believe one thing further : that because there is a creation there is a Creator. I believe that because there is force, there is a Projector of force ; because there is matter, there is spirit. I reverently believe these things. I am not angry with my neighbor because he does not ; it may be that he is right, that I am wrong ; but if there be a Power that sent me into this world, so far as that Power has given me wrong direction, or permitted wrong direction, that Power will judge me justly. So far as I disregard the light that I have, whatever it may be—whether it be light of reason, light of conscience, light of

history—so far as I do that which my judgment tells me is wrong, I am responsible and I am accountable.

Now the Protestant theory, as I understand it, is simply this: It would vary from the theory as taught by the mother church—it certainly swings far away from the theory as suggested by my friend; I understand the Protestant theory to be this: That every man is responsible to himself, to his neighbor, and to his God, for his thought. Not for the first impression—but for that impression, for that direction and result which he intelligently gives to the first impression or deduces from it. I understand that the Protestant idea is this: that man may think—we know he will think—for himself; but that he is responsible for it. That a man may speak his thought, so long as he does not hurt his neighbor. He must use his own liberty so that he shall not injure the well-being of any other one—so that when using this liberty, when exercising this freedom, he is accountable at the last to his God. And so Protestantism sends me into the world with this terrible and solemn responsibility.

It leaves Mr. Ingersoll free to speak his thought at the bar of his conscience, before the bar of his fellow-man, but it holds him in the inevitable grip of absolute responsibility for every light word idly spoken.

God grant that he may use that power so that he can face that responsibility at the last!

It leaves to every churchman liberty to believe and stand by his church according to his own conviction. It stands for this; the absolute liberty of each individual man to think, to write, to speak, to act, according to the best light within him; limited as to his fellows, by the condition that he shall not use that liberty so as to injure them; limited in the other direction, by those tremendous laws which are laws in spite of all rhetoric, and in spite of all logic.

If I put my finger into the fire, that fire burns. If I do a wrong, that wrong remains. If I hurt my neighbor, the wrong reacts upon myself. If I would try to escape what you call judgment, what you call penalty, I cannot escape the working of the inevitable law that follows a cause by effect; I cannot escape that inevitable law—not the creation of some dark monster flashing through the skies—but, as I believe, the beneficent creation which puts into the spiritual life the same control of law that guides the material life, which wisely makes me responsible, that in the solemnity of that responsibility I am bound to lift my brother up and never to drag my brother down.

REPLY OF COLONEL INGERSOLL.

The first gentleman who replied to me took the ground boldly that expression is not free—that no man has the right to express his real thoughts—and I suppose that he acted in accordance with that idea. How are you to know whether he thought a solitary thing that he said, or not? How is it possible for us to ascertain whether he is simply the mouthpiece of some other? Whether he is a free man, or whether he says that which he does not believe, it is impossible for us to ascertain.

He tells you that I am about to take away the religion of your mothers. I have heard that said a great many times. No doubt Mr. Coudert has the religion of his mother, and judging from the argument he made, his mother knew at least as much about these questions as her son. I believe that every good father and good mother wants to see the son and the daughter climb higher upon the great and splendid mount of thought than they reached.

You never can honor your father by going around swearing to his mistakes. You never can honor your mother by saying that ignorance is blessed because she did not know everything. I want to honor my parents by finding out more than they did.

There is another thing that I was a little astonished at—that Mr. Coudert, knowing that he would be in eternal felicity with his harp in his hand, seeing me in the world of the damned, could yet grow envious here to-night at my imaginary monument.

And he tells you—this Catholic—that Voltaire was an exceedingly good Christian compared with me. Do you know I am glad that I have compelled a Catholic—one who does not believe he has the right to express his honest thoughts—to pay a compliment to Voltaire simply because he thought it was at my expense?

I have an almost infinite admiration for Voltaire; and when I hear that name pronounced, I think of a plume floating over a mailed knight—I think of a man that rode to the beleaguered City of Catholicism and demanded a surrender—I think of a great man who thrust the dagger of assassination into your Mother Church, and from that wound she never will recover.

One word more. This gentleman says that children are destructive—that the first thing they do is to destroy their bibs. The gentleman, I should think from his talk, has preserved his!

They talk about blasphemy. What is blasphemy? Let us be honest with each other. Whoever lives upon the unpaid labor of others is a blasphemer. Whoever slanders, maligns, and betrays is a blasphemer. Whoever denies to others the rights that he claims for himself is a blasphemer.

Who is a worshiper? One who makes a happy home—one who fills the lives of wife and children with sunlight—one who has a heart where the flowers of kindness burst into blossom and fill the air with perfume—the man who sits beside his wife, prematurely old and wasted, and holds her thin hands in his and kisses them as passionately and loves her as truly and as rapturously as when she was a bride—he is a worshiper—that is worship.

And the gentleman brought forward as a reason why we should not have free speech, that only a few years ago some of the best men in the world, if you said a word in favor of liberty, would shoot you down. What an argument was that! They were not good men. They were the whippers of women and the stealers of babes—robbers of the trundle-

bed—assassins of human liberty. They knew no better, but I do not propose to follow the example of a barbarian because he was honestly a barbarian.

So much for debauching his family by telling them that his precepts are false. If he has taught them as he has taught us to-night, he has debauched their minds. I would be honest at the cradle. I would not tell a child anything as a certainty that I did not know. I would be absolutely honest.

But he says that thought is absolutely free—nobody can control thought. Let me tell him : Superstition is the jailer of the mind. You can so stuff a child with superstition that its poor little brain is a bastile and its poor little soul a convict. Fear is the jailer of the mind, and superstition is the assassin of liberty.

So when anybody goes into his family and tells these great and shining truths, instead of debauching his children they will kill the snakes that crawl in their cradles. Let us be honest and free.

And now, coming to the second gentleman. He is a Protestant. The Catholic Church says: "Don't think; pay your fare; this is a through ticket, and we will look out for your baggage." The Protestant Church says: "Read that Bible for yourselves; think for yourselves; but if you do not come to a

right conclusion you will be eternally damned." Any sensible man will say, "Then I won't read it—I'll believe it without reading it." And that is the only way you can be sure you will believe it; don't read it.

Governor Woodford says that we are responsible for our thoughts. Why? Could you help thinking as you did on this subject? No. Could you help believing the Bible? I suppose not. Could you help believing that story of Jonah? Certainly not—it looks reasonable in Brooklyn.

I stated that thought was the result of the impressions of nature upon the mind through the medium of the senses. He says you cannot have thought without memory. How did you get the first one?

Of course I intended to be understood—and the language is clear—that there could be no thought except through the impressions made upon the brain by nature through the avenues called the senses. Take away the senses, how would you think then? If you thought at all, I think you would agree with Mr. Coudert.

Now, I admit—so we need never have a contradiction about it—I admit that every human being is responsible to the person he injures. If he injures any man, woman, or child, or any dog, or the

lowest animal that crawls, he is responsible to that animal, to that being—in other words, he is responsible to any being that he has injured.

But you cannot injure an infinite Being, if there be one. I will tell you why. You cannot help him, and you cannot hurt him. If there be an infinite Being, he is conditionless—he does not want anything—he has it. You cannot help anybody that does not want something—you cannot help him. You cannot hurt anybody unless he is a conditioned being and you change his condition so as to inflict a harm. But if God be conditionless, you cannot hurt him, and you cannot help him. So do not trouble yourselves about the Infinite. All our duties lie within reach—all our duties are right here; and my religion is simply this:

First. Give to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself.

Second. If you tell your thought at all, tell your honest thought. Do not be a parrot—do not be an instrumentality for an organization. Tell your own thought, honor bright, what you think.

My next idea is, that the only possible good in the universe is happiness. The time to be happy is now. The place to be happy is here. The way to be happy is to try and make somebody else so.

My good friend General Woodford—and he is a good man telling the best he knows—says that I will be accountable at the bar up yonder. I am ready to settle that account now, and expect to be, every moment of my life—and when that settlement comes, if it does come, I do not believe that a solitary being can rise and say that I ever injured him or her.

But no matter what they say. Let me tell you a story, how we will settle if we do get there.

You remember the story told about the Mexican who believed that his country was the only one in the world, and said so. The priest told him that there was another country where a man lived who was eleven or twelve feet high, that made the whole world, and if he denied it, when that man got hold of him he would not leave a whole bone in his body. But he denied it. He was one of those men who would not believe further than his vision extended.

So one day in his boat,he was rocking away when the wind suddenly arose and he was blown out of sight of his home. After several days he was blown so far that he saw the shores of another country. Then he said, " My Lord ; I am gone ! I have been swearing all my life that there was no other country, and here it is ! " So he did his best

—paddled with what little strength he had left, reached the shore, and got out of his boat. Sure enough, there came down a man to meet him about twelve feet high. The poor little wretch was frightened almost to death, so he said to the tall man as he saw him coming down: "Mister, whoever you are, I denied your existence—I did not believe you lived; I swore there was no such country as this; but I see I was mistaken, and I am gone. You are going to kill me, and the quicker you do it the better and get me out of my misery. Do it now!"

The great man just looked at the little fellow, and said nothing, till he asked, "What are you going to do with me, because over in that other country I denied your existence?" "What am I going to do with you?" said the supposed God. "Now that you have got here, if you behave yourself I am going to treat you well."

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.*

CHAPTER I.

THE good part of Christmas is not always Christian—it is generally Pagan; that is to say, human, natural.

Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief. It came with the threat of everlasting torture on its lips. It meant war on earth and perdition hereafter.

It taught some good things—the beauty of love and kindness in man. But as a torch-bearer, as a bringer of joy, it has been a failure. It has given infinite consequences to the acts of finite beings, crushing the soul with a responsibility too great for mortals to bear. It has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men. Not satisfied with that, it has deprived God of the pardoning power.

*This is the famous Christmas Sermon written by Colonel Ingersoll and printed in the *Evening Telegram*, on December 19, 1891.

In answer to this "Christmas Sermon" the Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, the recognized organ of the Methodist Church, wrote an article, calling upon the public to boycott the *Evening Telegram* for publishing such a "sermon."

This attack was headed "Lies That Are Mountainous." The *Telegram* promptly accepted the issue raised by Dr. Buckley and dared him to do his utmost. On the very same day it published an answer from Colonel Ingersoll that echoed throughout America.

And yet it may have done some good by borrowing from the Pagan world the old festival called Christmas.

Long before Christ was born the Sun-God triumphed over the powers of Darkness. About the time that we call Christmas the days begin perceptibly to lengthen. Our barbarian ancestors were worshipers of the sun, and they celebrated his victory over the hosts of night. Such a festival was natural and beautiful. The most natural of all religions is the worship of the sun. Christianity adopted this festival. It borrowed from the Pagans the best it has.

I believe in Christmas and in every day that has been set apart for joy. We in America have too much work and not enough play. We are too much like the English.

I think it was Heinrich Heine who said that he thought a blaspheming Frenchman was a more pleasing object to God than a praying Englishman. We take our joys too sadly. I am in favor of all the good free days—the more the better.

Christmas is a good day to forgive and forget—a good day to throw away prejudices and hatreds—a good day to fill your heart and your house, and the hearts and houses of others, with sunshine.

R. G INGERSOLL.

COL. INGERSOLL'S REPLY TO DR. BUCKLEY.

II.

WHENEVER an orthodox editor attacks an unbeliever, look out for kindness, charity and love.

The gentle editor of the *Christian Advocate* charges me with having written three "gigantic falsehoods," and he points them out as follows:

First—"Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief."

Second—"It [Christianity] has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men."

Third—"Not satisfied with that, it [Christianity] has deprived God of the pardoning power."

Now, let us take up these "gigantic falsehoods" in their order and see whether they are in accord with the New Testament or not—whether they are supported by the creed of the Methodist Church.

I insist that Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief.

According to the orthodox creeds, Christianity came with the tidings that the human race was totally depraved, and that all men were in a lost condition, and that all who rejected or failed to believe the new religion, would be tormented in eternal fire.

These were not "tidings of great joy."

If the passengers on some great ship were told that the ship was to be wrecked, that a few would be saved and that nearly all would go to the bottom, would they talk about "tidings of great joy"? It is to be presumed that Christ knew what his mission was, and what he came for. He says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother." In my judgment, these are not "tidings of great joy."

Now, as to the message of eternal grief:

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous [meaning the Methodists] into life eternal."

"He that believeth not shall be damned."

"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

Knowing, as we do, that but few people have been believers, that during the last eighteen hundred years not one in a hundred has died in the faith, and that consequently nearly all the dead are in hell, it can truthfully be said that Christianity came with a message of eternal grief.

Now, as to the second "gigantic falsehood," to the effect that Christianity filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men.

In the Old Testament there is nothing about punishment in some other world, nothing about the flames and torments of hell. When Jehovah killed one of his enemies he was satisfied. His revenge was glutted when the victim was dead. The Old Testament gave the future to sleep and oblivion. But in the New Testament we are told that the punishment in another world is everlasting, and that

"the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

This awful doctrine, these frightful texts, filled the future with fear and flame. Building on these passages, the orthodox churches have constructed a penitentiary, in which nearly all the sons of men are to be imprisoned and tormented forever, and of this prison God is the keeper. The doors are opened only to receive.

The doctrine of eternal punishment is the infamy of infamies. As I have often said, the man who believes in eternal torment, in the justice of endless pain, is suffering from at least two diseases—petrifaction of the heart and putrefaction of the brain.

The next question is whether Christianity has deprived God of the pardoning power.

The Methodist Church and every orthodox church teaches that this life is a period of probation; that there is no chance given for reformation after death; that God gives no opportunity to repent in another world.

This is the doctrine of the Christian world. If this dogma be true, then God will never release a soul from hell—the pardoning power will never be exercised.

How happy God will be and how happy all the

saved will be, knowing that billions and billions of his children, of their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, and children are convicts in the eternal dungeons, and that the words of pardon will never be spoken!

Yet this is in accordance with the promise contained in the New Testament, of happiness here and eternal joy hereafter, to those who would desert brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children.

It seems to me clear that Christianity did not bring "tidings of great joy," but that it came with a "message of eternal grief"—that it did "fill the future with fear and flame," that it did make God "the keeper of an eternal penitentiary," that the penitentiary "was destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men," and that "it deprived God of the pardoning power."

Of course you can find passages full of peace, in the Bible, others of war—some filled with mercy, and others cruel as the fangs of a wild beast.

According to the Methodists, God has an eternal prison—an everlasting Siberia. There is to be an eternity of grief, of agony and shame.

What do I think of what the Doctor says about the *Telegram* for having published my Christmas sermon?

The editor of the *Christian Advocate* has no idea of what intellectual liberty means. He ought to know that a man should not be insulted because another man disagrees with him.

What right has Dr. Buckley to disagree with Cardinal Gibbons, and what right has Cardinal Gibbons to disagree with Dr. Buckley? The same right that I have to disagree with them both.

I do not warn people against reading Catholic or Methodist papers or books. But I do tell them to investigate for themselves—to stand by what they believe to be true, to deny the false, and, above all things, to preserve their mental manhood. The good Doctor wants the *Telegram* destroyed—wants all religious people to unite for the purpose of punishing the *Telegram*—because it published something with which the reverend Doctor does not agree, or rather that does not agree with the Doctor.

It is too late. That day has faded in the West of the past. The doctor of theology has lost his power. Theological thunder has lost its lightning—it is nothing now but noise, pleasing those who make it and amusing those who hear.

The *Telegram* has nothing to fear. It is, in the highest sense, a newspaper—wide-awake, alive, al-

ways on time, good to its friends, fair with its enemies, and true to the public.

What have I to say to the Doctor's personal abuse?

Nothing. A man may call me a devil, or the devil, or he may say that I am incapable of telling the truth, or that I tell lies, and yet all this proves nothing. My arguments remain unanswered.

I cannot afford to call Dr. Buckley names. I have good mental manners. The cause I represent (in part) is too great, too sacred, to be stained by an ignorant or a malicious personality.

I know that men do as they must with the light they have, and so I say—More light!

REPLY TO

REV. J. M. KING AND REV. THOMAS DIXON, JR.

III.

THE Rev. James M. King—who seems to have taken this occasion to become known—finds fault because "blasphemous utterances concerning Christmas" were published in the *Telegram*, and were allowed "to greet the eyes of innocent children and pure women."

How is it possible to blaspheme a day? One day is not, in and of itself, holier than another—that is to say, two equal spaces of time are substantially alike. We call a day "good" or "bad" according to what happens in the day. A day filled with happiness, with kind words, with noble deeds, is a good day. A day filled with misfortunes and anger and misery we call a bad day. But how is it possible to blaspheme a day?

A man may or may not believe that Christ was born on the 25th of December, and yet he may fill

that day, so far as he is concerned, with good thoughts and words and deeds. Another may really believe that Christ was born on that day, and yet do his worst to make all his friends unhappy. But how can the rights of what are called "clean families" be violated by reading the honest opinions of others as to whether Christmas is kept in honor of the birth of Christ, or in honor of the triumph of the sun over the hosts of darkness? Are Christian families so weak intellectually that they cannot bear to hear the other side? Or is their case so weak that the slightest evidence overthrows it? Why do all these ministers insist that it is ill-bred to even raise a question as to the truth of the improbable, or as to the improbability of the impossible?

A minister says to me that I am going to hell—that I am bound to be punished forever and ever—and thereupon I say to him: "There is no hell; you are mistaken; your Bible is not inspired; no human being is to suffer agony forever;" and thereupon, with an injured look, he asks me this question: "Why do you hurt my feelings?" It does not occur to him that I have the slightest right to object to his sentence of eternal grief.

Does the gentleman imagine that true men and pure women cannot differ with him? There are

many thousands of people who love and honor the memory of Jesus Christ, who yet have not the slightest belief in his divine origin, and who do not for one moment imagine that he was other than a good and heroic man. And there are thousands of people who admire the character of Jesus Christ who do not believe that he ever existed—who admire the character of Christ as they admire Imogen, or Perdita, not believing that any of the characters mentioned actually lived.

And it may be well enough here to state that no human being hates any really good man or good woman—that is, no human being hates a man known to be good—a woman known to be pure and good. No human being hates a lovable character.

It is perfectly easy for any one with the slightest imagination to understand how other people differ from him. I do not attribute a bad motive to a man simply because he disagrees with me. I do not say that a man is a Christian or a Mohammedan "for revenue only." I do not say that a man joins the Democratic party simply for office, or that he marches with the Republicans simply for position. I am willing to hear his reasons—with his motives I have nothing to do.

Mr. King imagines that I have denounced Chris-

tianity "for revenue only." Is he willing to admit that we have drifted so far from orthodox religion that the way to make money is to denounce Christianity? I can hardly believe, for joy, that liberty of thought has advanced so far. I regret exceedingly that there is not an absolute foundation for his remark. I am indeed sorry that it is possible in this world of ours for any human being to make a living out of the ignorance and fear of his fellow-men. Still, it gives me great hope for the future to read, even in this ignorant present, that there is one man, and that man myself, who advocates human liberty —the absolute enfranchisement of the soul—and does it "for revenue"—because this charge is such a splendid compliment to my fellow-men.

Possibly the remark of the Rev. Mr. King will be gratifying to the *Telegram* and will satisfy that brave and progressive sheet that it is in harmony with the intelligence of the age.

My opinion is that the *Telegram* will receive the praise of enlightened and generous people.

Personally I judge a man not so much by his theories as by his practice, and I would much rather meet on the desert—were I about to perish for want of water—a Mohammedan who would give me a drink than a Christian who would not; because,

after all is said and done, we are compelled to judge people by their actions.

I do not know what takes place in the invisible world called the brain, inhabited by the invisible something we call the mind. All that takes place there is invisible and soundless. This mind, hidden in this brain, masked by flesh, remains forever unseen, and the only evidence we can possibly have as to what occurs in that world, we obtain from the actions of the man, of the woman. By these actions we judge of the character, of the soul. So I make up my mind as to whether a man is good or bad, not by his theories, but by his actions.

Under no circumstances can the expression of an honest opinion, couched in becoming language, amount to blasphemy. And right here it may be well enough to inquire: What is blasphemy?

A man who knowingly assaults the true, who knowingly endeavors to stain the pure, who knowingly maligns the good and noble, is a blasphemer. A man who deserts the truth because it is unpopular is a blasphemer. He who runs with the hounds knowing that the hare is in the right is a blasphemer.

In the soul of every man, or in the temple inhabited by the soul, there is one niche in which can be found the statue of the ideal. In the presence of

this statue the good man worships—the bad man blasphemes—that is to say, he is not true to the ideal.

A man who slanders a pure woman or an honest man is a blasphemer. So, too, a man who does not give the honest transcript of his mind is a blasphemer. If a man really thinks the character of Jehovah, as portrayed in the Old Testament, is good, and he denounces Jehovah as bad, he is a blasphemer. If he really believes that the character of Jehovah, as portrayed in the Old Testament, is bad, and he pronounces it good, he is a blasphemer and a coward.

All laws against "blasphemy" have been passed by the numerically strong and intellectually weak. These laws have been passed by those who, finding no help in logic, appealed to the legislature.

Back of all these superstitions you will find some self-interest. I do not say that this is true in every case, but I do say that if priests had not been fond of mutton, lambs never would have been sacrificed to God. Nothing was ever carried to the temple that the priest could not use, and it always so happened that God wanted what his agents liked.

Now, I will not say that all priests have been priests "for revenue only," but I must say that the

history of the world tends to show that the sacerdotal class prefer revenue without religion to religion without revenue.

I am much obliged to the Rev. Mr. King for admitting that an infidel has a right to publish his views at his own expense, and with the utmost cheerfulness I accord that right to a Christian. The only thing I have ever objected to is the publication of his views at the expense of others.

I cannot admit, however, that the ideas contained in what is known as the Christmas Sermon are "revolting to a vast majority of the people who give character to the community in which we live" I suppose that a very large majority of men and women who disagree with me are perfectly satisfied that I have the right to disagree with them, and that I do not disagree with them to any greater degree than they disagree with me. And I also imagine that a very large majority of intelligent people are perfectly willing to hear the other side.

I do not regard religious opinions or political opinions as exotics that have to be kept under glass, protected from the frosts of common sense or the tyrannous north wind of logic. Such plants are hardly worth preserving. They certainly ought to be hardy enough to stand the climate of free discus-

sion, and if they cannot, the sooner they die the better.

I do not think there was anything blasphemous or impure in the words published by the *Telegram*. The most that can possibly be said against them, calculated to excite the prejudice of Christians, is that they were true—that they cannot be answered except by abuse.

It is not possible, in this day and generation, to stay the rising flood of intellectual freedom by keeping the names of thinkers out of print. The church has had the field for eighteen hundred years. For most of this time it has held the sword and purse of the world. For many centuries it controlled colleges and universities and schools. It had within its gift wealth and honor. It held the keys, so far as this world is concerned, of heaven and hell—that is to say, of prosperity and misfortune. It pursued its enemies even to the grave. It reddened the scaffold with the best blood, and kept the sword of persecution wet for many centuries. Thousands and thousands have died in its dungeons. Millions of reputations have been blasted by its slanders. It has made millions of widows and orphans, and it has not only ruled this world, but it has pretended to hold the keys of eternity, and under this pretence

it has sentenced countless millions to eternal flames.

At last the spirit of independence rose against its monstrous assumptions. It has been growing somewhat weaker. It has been for many years gradually losing its power. The sword of the state belongs now to the people. The partnership between altar and throne has in many countries been dissolved. The adulterous marriage of church and state has ceased to exist. Men are beginning to express their honest thoughts. In the arena where speech is free, superstition is driven to the wall. Man relies more and more on the facts in nature, and the real priest is the interpreter of nature. The pulpit is losing its power. In a little while religion will take its place with astrology, with the black art, and its ministers will take rank with magicians and sleight-of-hand performers.

With regard to the letter of the Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr., I have but little to say.

I am glad that he believes in a free platform and a free press—that he, like Lucretia Mott, believes in "truth for authority, and not authority for truth." At the same time I do not see how the fact that I am not a scientist has the slightest bearing upon the question; but if there is any fact that I have avoided

or misstated, then I wish that fact to be pointed out. I admit also, that I am a "sentimentalist"—that is, that I am governed, to a certain extent, by sentiment—that my mind is so that cruelty is revolting and that mercy excites my love and admiration. I admit that I am so much of "a sentimentalist" that I have no love for the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and that it is impossible for me to believe a creed that fills the prison house of hell with countless billions of men, women and children.

I am also glad that the reverend gentleman admits that I have "stabbed to the heart hundreds of superstitions and lies," and I hope to stab many, many more, and if I succeed in stabbing all lies to the heart there will be no foundation left for what I called "orthodox" Christianity—but goodness will survive, justice will live, and the flower of mercy will shed its perfume forever.

When we take into consideration the fact that the Rev. Mr. Dixon is a minister and believes that he is called upon to deliver to the people a divine message, I do not wonder that he makes the following assertion: "If God could choose Balaam's ass to speak a divine message, I do not see why he could not utilize the Colonel." It is natural for a man to justify himself and to defend his own occupation. Mr. Dixon,

however, will remember that the ass was much superior to the prophet of God, and that the argument was all on the side of the ass. And, furthermore, that the spiritual discernment of the ass far exceeded that of the prophet. It was the ass who saw the angel when the prophet's eye was dim. I suggest to the Rev. Mr. Dixon that he read the account once more, and he will find—

First, that the ass *first* saw the angel of the Lord; *second*, that the prophet Balaam was cruel, unreasonable, and brutal; *third*, that the prophet so lost his temper that he wanted to kill the innocent ass, and the ass, not losing her temper, reasoned with the prophet and demonstrated not only her intellectual but her moral superiority. In addition to all this the angel of the Lord had to open the eyes of the prophet —in other words, had to work a miracle—in order to make the prophet equal to the ass, and not only so, but rebuked him for his cruelty. And this same angel admitted that without any miracle whatever the ass saw him—the angel—showing that the spiritual discernment of the ass in those days was far superior to that of the prophet.

I regret that the Rev. Mr. King loses his temper and that the Rev. Mr. Dixon is not quite polite.

All of us should remember that passion clouds the

judgment, and that he who seeks for victory loses sight of the cause.

And there is another thing: He who has absolute confidence in the justice of his position can afford to be good-natured. Strength is the foundation of kindness; weakness is often malignant, and when argument fails passion comes to the rescue.

Let us be good-natured. Let us have respect for the rights of each other.

The course pursued by the *Telegram* is worthy of all praise. It has not only been just to both sides, but it has been—as is its custom—true to the public.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

INGERSOLL AGAIN ANSWERS HIS CRITICS.

IV.

To the Editor of the Evening Telegram :

SOME of the gentlemen who have given their ideas through the columns of the *Telegram* have wandered from the questions under discussion. It may be well enough to state what is really in dispute.

I was called to account for having stated that Christianity did not bring "tidings of great joy," but a message of eternal grief—that it filled the future with fear and flame—made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, in which most of the children of men were to be imprisoned forever, and that, not satisfied with that, it had deprived God of the pardoning power.

These statements were called "mountainous lies" by the Rev. Dr. Buckley, and because the *Telegram* had published the "Christmas Sermon" containing these statements, he insisted that such a paper

should not be allowed in the families of Christians or of Jews—in other words, that the *Telegram* should be punished, and that good people should refuse to allow that sheet to come into their homes.

It will probably be admitted by all fair-minded people that if the orthodox creeds be true, then Christianity was and is the bearer of a message of eternal grief, and a large majority of the human race are to become eternal convicts, and God has deprived himself of the pardoning power. According to those creeds, no word of mercy to any of the lost can ever fall from the lips of the Infinite.

The Universalists deny that such was or is the real message of Christianity. They insist that all are finally to be saved. If that doctrine be true, then I admit that Christianity came with "tidings of great joy."

Personally I have no quarrel with the Universalist Church. I have no quarrel with any creed that expresses hope for all of the human race. I find fault with no one for filling the future with joy —for dreaming splendid dreams and for uttering splendid prophecies. I do not object to Christianity because it promises heaven to a few, but because it threatens the many with perdition.

It does not seem possible to me that a God who

loved men to that degree that he died that they might be saved, abandons his children the moment they are dead. It seems to me that an infinite God might do something for a soul after it has reached the other world.

Is it possible that infinite wisdom can do no more than is done for a majority of souls in this world?

Think of the millions born in ignorance and filth, raised in poverty and crime. Think of the millions who are only partially developed in this world. Think of the weakness of the will, of the power of passion. Think of the temptations innumerable. Think, too, of the tyranny of man, of the arrogance of wealth and position, of the sufferings of the weak —and can we then say that an infinite God has done, in this world, all that could be done for the salvation of his children? Is it not barely possible that something may be done in another world? Is there nothing left for God to do for a poor, ignorant, criminal human soul after it leaves this world? Can God do nothing except to pronounce the sentence of eternal pain?

I insist that if the orthodox creed be true, Christianity did not come with "tidings of great joy," but that its message was and is one of eternal grief.

If the orthodox creed be true, the universe is a

vast blunder—an infinite crime. Better, a thousand times, that every pulse of life should cease—better that all the gods should fall palsied from their thrones, than that the creed of Christendom should be true.

There is another question and that involves the freedom of the press.

The *Telegram* has acted with the utmost fairness and with the highest courage. After all, the American people admire the man who takes his stand and bravely meets all comers. To be an instrumentality of progress, the press must be free. Only the free can carry a torch. Liberty sheds light.

The editor or manager of a newspaper occupies a public position, and he must not treat his patrons as though they were weak and ignorant children. He must not, in the supposed interest of any ism, suppress the truth—neither must he be dictated to by any church or any society of believers or unbelievers. The *Telegram*, by its course, has given a certificate of its manliness, and the public, by its course, has certified that it appreciates true courage.

All Christians should remember that facts are not sectarian, and that the sciences are not bound by the creeds. We should remember that there are no such things as Methodist mathematics, or Baptist

botany, or Catholic chemistry. The sciences are secular.

The Rev. Mr. Peters seems to have mistaken the issues—and yet, in some things, I agree with him. He is certainly right when he says that "Mr. Buckley's cry to boycott the *Telegram* is unmanly and un-American," but I am not certain that he is right when he says that it is un-Christian.

The church has not been in the habit of pursuing enemies with kind words and charitable deeds. To tell the truth, it has always been rather relentless. It has preached forgiveness, but it has never forgiven. There is in the history of Christendom no instance where the church has extended the hand of friendship to a man who denied the truth of its creed.

There is in the church no spirit—no climate—of compromise. In the nature of things there can be none, because the church claims that it is absolutely right—that there is only one road leading to heaven. It demands unconditional surrender. It will not bear contradiction. It claims to have the absolute truth. For these reasons it cannot consistently compromise, any more than a mathematician could change the multiplication table to meet the view of some one who should deny that five times five are twenty-five.

The church does not give its opinion—it claims to know—it demands belief. Honesty, industry, generosity count for nothing in the absence of belief. It has taught and still teaches that no man can reach heaven simply through good and honest deeds. It believes and teaches that the man who relies upon himself will be eternally punished—and why should the church forgive a man whom it thinks its God is waiting somewhat impatiently to damn?

The Rev. Mr. Peters asks—and probably honestly thinks that the questions are pertinent to the issues involved—"What has infidelity done for the world? What colleges, hospitals, and schools has it founded? What has it done for the elevation of public morals?" And he inquires what science or art has been originated by infidelity. He asks how many slaves it has liberated, how many inebriates it has reclaimed, how many fallen women it has restored, and what it did for the relief of the wounded and dying soldiers; and concludes by asking what life it ever assisted to higher holiness, and what death it has ever cheered.

Although these questions have nothing whatever to do with the matters under discussion, still it may be well enough to answer them.

It is cheerfully admitted that hospitals and asylums have been built by Christians in Christian

countries, and it is also admitted that hospitals and asylums have been built in countries not Christian; that there were such institutions in China thousands of years before Christ was born, and that many centuries before the establishment of any orthodox church there were asylums on the banks of the Nile—asylums for the old, the poor, the infirm—asylums for the blind and for the insane, and that the Egyptians, even of those days, endeavored to cure insanity with kindness and affection. The same is true of India and probably of most ancient nations.

There has always been more or less humanity in man—more or less goodness in the human heart. So far as we know, mothers have always loved their children. There must always have been more good than evil, otherwise the human race would have perished. The best things in the Christian religion came from the heart of man. Pagan lips uttered the sublimest of truths, and all ages have been redeemed by honesty, heroism, and love.

But let me answer these questions in their order.

First—As to the schools.

It is most cheerfully admitted that the Catholics have always been in favor of education—that is to say, of education enough to make a Catholic out of a heathen. It is also admitted that Protestants have

always been in favor of enough education to make a Protestant out of a Catholic. Many schools and many colleges have been established for the spread of what is called the Gospel and for the education of the clergy. Presbyterians have founded schools for the benefit of their creed. The Methodists have established colleges for the purpose of making Methodists. The same is true of nearly all the sects. As a matter of fact, these schools have in many important directions hindered rather than helped the cause of real education. The pupils were not taught to investigate for themselves. They were not allowed to think. They were told that thought is dangerous. They were stuffed and crammed with creeds—with the ideas of others. Their credulity was applauded and their curiosity condemned. If all the people had been educated in these sectarian schools, all the people would have been far more ignorant than they are. These schools have been, and most of them still are, the enemies of higher education, and just to the extent that they are under the control of theologians they are hindrances, and just to the extent that they have become secularized they have been and are a benefit.

Our public-school system is not Christian. It is secular. Yet I admit that it never could have been

established without the assistance of Christians—neither could it have been supported without the assistance of others. But such is the value placed upon education that people of nearly all denominations, and of nearly all religions, and of nearly all opinions, for the most part agree that the children of a nation should be educated by the nation. Some religious people are opposed to these schools because they are not religious—because they do not teach some creed—but a large majority of the people stand by the public schools as they are. These schools are growing better and better, simply because they are growing less and less theological, more and more secular.

Infidelity, or agnosticism, or free thought, has insisted that only that should be taught in schools which somebody knows or has good reason to believe.

The greatest professors in our colleges to-day are those who have the least confidence in the supernatural, and the schools that stand highest in the estimation of the most intelligent are those that have drifted farthest from the orthodox creeds. Free thought has always been and ever must be the friend of education. Without free thought there can be no such thing—in the highest sense—as a

school. Unless the mind is free, there are no teachers and there are no pupils, in any just and splendid sense.

The church has been and still is the enemy of education, because it has been in favor of intellectual slavery, and the theological schools have been what might be called the deformatories of the human mind.

For instance: A man is graduated from an orthodox university. In this university he has studied astronomy, and yet he believes that Joshua stopped the sun. He has studied geology, and yet he asserts the truth of the Mosaic cosmogony. He has studied chemistry, and yet believes that water was turned into wine. He has been taught the ordinary theory of cause and effect, and at the same time he thoroughly believes in the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes. Can such an institution, with any propriety, be called a seat of learning? Can we not say of such a university what Bruno said of Oxford: "Learning is dead and Oxford is its widow."

Year after year the religious colleges are improving—simply because they are becoming more and more secular, less and less theological. Whether infidelity has founded universities or not, it can truthfully be said that the spirit of investigation, the spirit

of free thought, the attitude of mental independence, contended for by those who are called infidels, have made schools useful instead of hurtful.

Can it be shown that any infidel has ever raised his voice against education? Can there be found in the literature of free thought one line against the enlightenment of the human race? Has free thought ever endeavored to hide or distort a fact? Has it not always appealed to the senses—to demonstration? It has not said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;" but it has said, "He that hath brains to think, let him think."

The object of a school should be to ascertain truth in every direction, to the end that man may know the conditions of happiness—and every school should be absolutely free. No teacher should be bound by anything except a perceived fact. He should not be the slave of a creed, engaged in the business of enslaving others.

So much for schools.

Second—As to public morals.

Christianity teaches that all offences can be forgiven. Every church unconsciously allows people to commit crimes on a credit. I do not mean by this that any church consciously advocates immorality. I most cheerfully admit that thousands and thousands

of ministers are endeavoring to do good—that they are pure, self-denying men, trying to make this world better. But there is a frightful defect in their philosophy. They say to the bank cashier: You must not steal, you must not take a dollar—larceny is wrong, it is contrary to all law, human and divine—but if you do steal every cent in the bank, God will as gladly, quickly forgive you in Canada as he will in the United States. On the other hand, what is called infidelity says: There is no being in the universe who rewards, and there is no being who punishes—every act has its consequences. If the act is good, the consequences are good; if the act is bad, the consequences are bad; and these consequences must be borne by the actor. It says to every human being: You must reap what you sow. There is no reward, there is no punishment, but there are consequences, and these consequences are the invisible and implacable police of nature. They cannot be avoided. They cannot be bribed. No power can awe them, and there is not gold enough in the world to make them pause. Even a God cannot induce them to release for one instant their victim.

This great truth is, in my judgment, the gospel of morality. If all men knew that they must inevitably bear the consequences of their own actions—if

they absolutely knew that they could not injure another without injuring themselves, the world, in my judgment, would be far better than it is.

Free thought has attacked the morality of what is called the atonement. The innocent should not suffer for the guilty, and if the innocent does suffer for the guilty, that cannot by any possibility justify the guilty. The reason a thing is wrong is because it, in some way, causes the innocent to suffer. This being the very essence of wrong, how can the suffering of innocence justify the guilty? If there be a world of joy, he who is worthy to enter that world must be willing to carry his own burdens in this.

So much for morality.

Third—As to sciences and art.

I do not believe that we are indebted to Christianity for any science. I do not remember that one science is mentioned in the New Testament. There is not one word, so far as I remember, about education—nothing about any science, nothing about art. The writers of the New Testament seem to have thought that the world was about coming to an end. This world was to be sacrificed absolutely to the next. The affairs of this life were not worth speaking of. All people were exhorted to prepare at once for the other life.

The sciences have advanced in the proportion that they did not interfere with orthodox theology. To the extent that they were supposed to interfere with theology they have been obstructed and denounced. Astronomy was found to be inconsistent with the Scriptures, and the astronomers were imprisoned and despised. Geology contradicted the Mosaic account, and the geologists were denounced and persecuted. Every step taken in astronomy was taken in spite of the church, and every fact in geology had to fight its way. The same is true as to the science of medicine. The church wished to cure disease by necromancy, by charm and prayer, and with the bones of the saints. The church wished man to rely entirely upon God—that is to say, upon the church—and not upon himself. The physician interfered with the power and prosperity of the priest, and those who appealed to physicians were denounced as lacking faith in God. This state of things existed even in the Old Testament times. A king failed to send for the prophets, but sent for a physician, and then comes this piece of grim humor: "And Asa slept with his fathers."

The great names in science are not those of recognized saints.

BRUNO—one of the greatest and bravest of men—

greatest of all martyrs—perished at the stake, because he insisted on the existence of other worlds and taught the astronomy of Galileo.

HUMBOLDT—in some respects the wisest man known to the scientific world—denied the existence of the supernatural and "the truths of revealed religion," and yet he revolutionized the thought of his day and left a legacy of intellectual glory to the race.

DARWIN—greatest of scientists—so great that our time will probably be known as "Darwin's Century"—had not the slightest confidence in any possible phase of the so-called supernatural. This great man left the creed of Christendom without a foundation. He brought as witnesses against the inspiration of the Scriptures such a multitude of facts, such an overwhelming amount of testimony, that it seems impossible to me that any unprejudiced man can, after hearing the testimony, remain a believer in evangelical religion. He accomplished more than all the schools, colleges, and universities that Christianity has founded. He revolutionized the philosophy of the civilized world.

The writers who have done most for science have been the most bitterly opposed by the church. There is hardly a valuable book in the libraries of the world that cannot be found on the "Index Ex-

purgatorius." Kant and Fichte and Spinoza were far above and beyond the orthodox world. Voltaire did more for freedom than any other man, and yet the church denounced him with a fury amounting to insanity—called him an atheist, although he believed not only in God, but in special providence. He was opposed to the church—that is to say, opposed to slavery, and for that reason he was despised.

And what shall I say of D'Holbach, of Hume, of Buckle, of Draper, of Haeckel, of Büchner, of Tyndall and Huxley, of Auguste Comte, and hundreds and thousands of others who have filled the scientific world with light and the heart of man with love and kindness?

It may be well enough, in regard to art, to say that Christianity is indebted to Greece and Rome for its highest conceptions, and it may be well to add that for many centuries Christianity did the best it could to destroy the priceless marbles of Greece and Rome. A few were buried, and in that way were saved from Christian fury.

The same is true of the literature of the classic world. A few fragments were rescued, and these became the seeds of modern literature. A few statues were preserved, and they are to-day models for all the world.

Of course it will be admitted that there is much art in Christian lands, because, in spite of the creeds, Christians, so-called, have turned their attention to this world. They have beautified their homes, they have endeavored to clothe themselves in purple and fine linen. They have been forced from banquets or from luxury by the difficulty of camels going through the eyes of needles or the impossibility of carrying water to the rich man. They have cultivated this world, and the arts have lived. Did they obey the precepts that they find in their sacred writings there would be no art, they would "take no thought for the morrow," they would "consider the lilies of the field."

Fourth—As to the liberation of slaves.

It was exceedingly unfortunate for the Rev. Mr. Peters that he spoke of slavery. The Bible upholds human slavery—white slavery. The Bible was quoted by all slaveholders and slave-traders. The man who went to Africa to steal women and children took the Bible with him. He planted himself firmly on the Word of God. As Whittier says of Whitefield:

"He bade the slave ship speed from coast to coast,
Fanned by the wings of the Holy Ghost."

So when the poor wretches were sold to the plant-

ers, the planters defended their action by reading the Bible. When a poor woman was sold, her children torn from her breast, the auction block on which she stood was the Bible ; the auctioneer who sold her quoted the Scriptures ; the man who bought her repeated the quotations, and the ministers from the pulpit said to the weeping woman, as her child was carried away : " Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

Freethinkers in all ages have been opposed to slavery. Thomas Paine did more for human liberty than any other man who ever stood upon the western world. The first article he ever wrote in this country was one against the institution of slavery. Freethinkers have also been in favor of free bodies. Freethinkers have always said " free hands," and the infidels, the wide world over, have been friends of freedom.

Fifth—As to the reclamation of inebriates.

Much has been said, and for many years, on the subject of temperance—much has been uttered by priests and laymen—and yet there seems to be a subtle relation between rum and religion. Scotland is extremely orthodox, yet it is not extremely temperate. England is nothing if not religious, and London is, par excellence, the Christian city of the world, and

yet it is the most intemperate. The Mohammedans —followers of a false prophet—do not drink.

Sixth—As to the humanity of infidelity.

Can it be said that people have cared for the wounded and dying only because they were orthodox?

Is it not true that religion, in its efforts to propagate the creed of forgiveness by the sword, has caused the death of more than one hundred and fifty millions of human beings? Is it not true that where the church has cared for one orphan it has created hundreds? Can Christianity afford to speak of war?

The Christian nations of the world to-day are armed against each other. In Europe, all that can be gathered by taxation—all that can be borrowed by pledging the prosperity of the future—the labor of those yet unborn—is used for the purpose of keeping Christians in the field, to the end that they may destroy other Christians, or at least prevent other Christians from destroying them. Europe is covered with churches and fortifications, with temples and with forts—hundreds of thousands of priests, millions of soldiers, countless Bibles and countless bayonets—and that whole country is oppressed and impoverished for the purpose of carrying on war. The people have become deformed by labor, and yet Christianity boasts of peace.

Seventh—"And what death has infidelity ever cheered?"

Is it possible for the orthodox Christian to cheer the dying when the dying is told that there is a world of eternal pain, and that he, unless he has been forgiven, is to be an eternal convict? Will it cheer him to know that, even if he is to be saved, countless millions are to be lost? Is it possible for the Christian religion to put a smile upon the face of death?

On the other hand, what is called infidelity says to the dying: What happens to you will happen to all. If there be another world of joy, it is for all. If there is another life, every human being will have the eternal opportunity of doing right—the eternal opportunity to live, to reform, to enjoy. There is no monster in the sky. There is no Moloch who delights in the agony of his children. These frightful things are savage dreams.

Infidelity puts out the fires of hell with the tears of pity.

Infidelity puts the seven-hued arch of Hope over every grave.

Let us then, gentlemen, come back to the real questions under discussion. Let us not wander away.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Jan'y 9, 1891.

INGERSOLL CONTINUES THE BATTLE.

V.

NO one objects to the morality of Christianity. The industrious people of the world—those who have anything—are, as a rule, opposed to larceny; a very large majority of people object to being murdered, and so we have laws against larceny and murder. A large majority of people believe in what they call, or what they understand to be, justice—at least as between others. There is no very great difference of opinion among civilized people as to what is or is not moral.

It cannot truthfully be said that the man who attacks Buddhism attacks all morality. He does not attack goodness, justice, mercy, or anything that tends in his judgment to the welfare of mankind; but he attacks Buddhism. So one attacking what is called Christianity does not attack kindness, charity, or any virtue. He attacks something that has been added

to the virtues. He does not attack the flower, but what he believes to be the parasite.

If people, when they speak of Christianity, include the virtues common to all religions, they should not give Christianity credit for all the good that has been done. There were millions of virtuous men and women, millions of heroic and self-denying souls before Christianity was known.

It does not seen possible to me that love, kindness, justice, or charity ever caused any one who possessed and practiced these virtues to persecute his fellow-man on account of a difference of belief. If Christianity has persecuted, some reason must exist outside of the virtues it has inculcated. If this reason—this cause—is inherent in that something else, which has been added to the ordinary virtues, then Christianity can properly be held accountable for the persecution. Of course back of Christianity is the nature of man, and, primarily, it may be responsible.

Is there anything in Christianity that will account for such persecutions—for the Inquisition? It certainly was taught by the church that belief was necessary to salvation, and it was thought at the same time that the fate of man was eternal punishment; that the state of man was that of depravity, and that

there was but one way by which he could be saved, and that was through belief—through faith. As long as this was honestly believed, Christians would not allow heretics or infidels to preach a doctrine to their wives, to their children, or to themselves which, in their judgment, would result in the damnation of souls.

The law gives a father the right to kill one who is about to do great bodily harm to his son. Now, if a father has the right to take the life of a man simply because he is attacking the body of his son, how much more would he have the right to take the life of one who was about to assassinate the soul of his son!

Christians reasoned in this way. In addition to this, they felt that God would hold the community responsible if the community allowed a blasphemer to attack the true religion. Therefore they killed the freethinker, or rather the free talker, in self-defence.

At the bottom of religious persecution is the doctrine of self-defence; that is to say, the defence of the soul. If the founder of Christianity had plainly said: "It is not necessary to believe in order to be saved; it is only necessary to do, and he who really loves his fellow-men, who is kind,

honest, just and charitable, is to be forever blest"—if he had only said that, there would probably have been but little persecution.

If he had added to this: "You must not persecute in my name. The religion I teach is the Religion of Love—not the Religion of Force and Hatred. You must not imprison your fellow-men. You must not stretch them upon racks, or crush their bones in iron boots. You must not flay them alive. You must not cut off their eyelids, or pour molten lead into their ears. You must treat all with absolute kindness. If you cannot convert your neighbor by example, persuasion, argument, that is the end. You must never resort to force, and, whether he believes as you do or not, treat him always with kindness"—his followers then would not have murdered their fellows in his name.

If Christ was in fact God, he knew the persecutions that would be carried on in his name; he knew the millions that would suffer death through torture; and yet he died without saying one word to prevent what he must have known, if he were God, would happen.

All that Christianity has added to morality is worthless and useless. Not only so—it has been hurtful. Take Christianity from morality and the

useful is left, but take morality from Christianity and the useless remains.

Now, falling back on the old assertion, "By its fruits we may know Christianity," then I think we are justified in saying that, as Christianity consists of a mixture of morality and *something else*, and as morality never has persecuted a human being, and as Christianity has persecuted millions, the cause of the persecution must be the *something else* that was added to morality.

I cannot agree with the reverend gentleman when he says that "Christianity has taught mankind the priceless value and dignity of human nature." On the other hand, Christianity has taught that the whole human race is by nature depraved, and that if God should act in accordance with his sense of justice, all the sons of men would be doomed to eternal pain. Human nature has been derided, has been held up to contempt and scorn, all our desires and passions denounced as wicked and filthy.

Dr. Da Costa asserts that Christianity has taught mankind the value of freedom. It certainly has not been the advocate of free thought; and what is freedom worth if the mind is to be enslaved?

Dr. Da Costa knows that millions have been sacrificed in their efforts to be free; that is, millions have

been sacrificed for exercising their freedom as against the church.

It is not true that the church "has taught and established the fact of human brotherhood." This has been the result of a civilization to which Christianity itself has been hostile.

Can we prove that "the church established human brotherhood" by banishing the Jews from Spain; by driving out the Moors; by the tortures of the Inquisition; by butchering the Covenanters of Scotland; by the burning of Bruno and Servetus; by the persecution of the Irish; by whipping and hanging Quakers in New England; by the slave trade; and by the hundreds of wars waged in the name of Christ?

We all know that the Bible upholds slavery in its very worst and most cruel form; and how it can be said that a religion founded upon a Bible that upholds the institution of slavery has taught and established the fact of human brotherhood, is beyond my imagination to conceive.

Neither do I think it true that "we are indebted to Christianity for the advancement of science, art, philosophy, letters and learning."

I cheerfully admit that we are indebted to Christianity for some learning, and that the human mind has been developed by the discussion of the absurdi-

ties of superstition. Certainly millions and millions have had what might be called mental exercise, and their minds may have been somewhat broadened by the examination, even, of these absurdities, contradictions, and impossibilities. The church was not the friend of science or learning when it burned Vanini for writing his "Dialogues Concerning Nature." What shall we say of the "Index Expurgatorius"? For hundreds of years all books of any particular value were placed on the "Index," and good Catholics forbidden to read them. Was this in favor of science and learning?

That we are indebted to Christianity for the advancement of science seems absurd. What science? Christianity was certainly the enemy of astronomy, and I believe that it was Mr. Draper who said that astronomy took her revenge, so that not a star that glitters in all the heavens bears a Christian name.

Can it be said that the church has been the friend of geology, or of any true philosophy? Let me show how this is impossible.

The church accepts the Bible as an inspired book. Then the only object is to find its meaning, and if that meaning is opposed to any result that the human mind may have reached, the meaning stands and the result reached by the mind must be abandoned.

For hundreds of years the Bible was the standard, and whenever anything was asserted in any science contrary to the Bible, the church immediately denounced the scientist. I admit the standard has been changed, and ministers are very busy, not trying to show that science does not agree with the Bible, but that the Bible agrees with science.

Certainly Christianity has done little for art. The early Christians destroyed all the marbles of Greece and Rome upon which they could lay their violent hands; and nothing has been produced by the Christian world equal to the fragments that were accidentally preserved. There have been many artists who were Christians; but they were not artists because they were Christians; because there have been many Christians who were not artists. It cannot be said that art is born of any creed. The mode of expression may be determined, and probably is to a certain degree, by the belief of the artist; but not his artistic perception and feeling.

So, Galileo did not make his discoveries because he was a Christian, but in spite of it. His Bible was the other way, and so was his creed. Consequently, they could not by any possibility have assisted him. Kepler did not discover or announce what are known as the "Three Laws" because he was a

Christian; but, as I said about Galileo, in spite of his creed.

Every Christian who has really found out and demonstrated and clung to a fact inconsistent with the absolute inspiration of the Scriptures, has done so certainly without the assistance of his creed.

Let me illustrate this: When our ancestors were burning each other to please God; when they were ready to destroy a man with sword and flame for teaching the rotundity of the world, the Moors in Spain were teaching geography to their children with brass globes. So, too, they had observatories and knew something of the orbits of the stars.

They did not find out these things because they were Mohammedans, or on account of their belief in the impossible. They were far beyond the Christians, intellectually, and it has been very poetically said by Mrs. Browning, that "Science was thrust into the brain of Europe on the point of a Moorish lance."

From the Arabs we got our numerals, making mathematics of the higher branches practical. We also got from them the art of making cotton paper, which is almost at the foundation of modern intelligence. We learned from them to make cotton cloth, making cleanliness possible in Christendom.

So from among people of different religions we have learned many useful things; but they did not discover them on account of their religion.

It will not do to say that the religion of Greece was true because the Greeks were the greatest sculptors. Neither is it an argument in favor of monarchy that Shakespeare, the greatest of men, was born and lived in a monarchy.

Dr. Da Costa takes one of the effects of a general cause, or of a vast number of causes, and makes it the cause, not only of other effects, but of the general cause. He seems to think that all events for many centuries, and especially all the good ones, were caused by Christianity.

As a matter of fact, the civilization of our time is the result of countless causes with which Christianity had little to do, except by way of hindrance.

Does the Doctor think that the material progress of the world was caused by this passage: "Take no thought for the morrow"?

Does he seriously insist that the wealth of Christendom rests on this inspired declaration: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven"?

The Rev. Mr. Peters, in answer, takes the ground

that the Bible has produced the richest and most varied literature the world has ever seen.

This, I think, is hardly true. Has not most of modern literature been produced in spite of the Bible? Did not Christians, for many generations, take the ground that the Bible was the only important book, and that books differing from the Bible should be destroyed?

If Christianity—Catholic and Protestant—could have had its way, the works of Voltaire, Spinoza, Hume, Paine, Humboldt, Darwin, Haeckel, Spencer, Comte, Huxley, Tyndall, Draper, Goethe, Gibbon, Buckle and Büchner would not have been published. In short, the philosophy that enlightens and the fiction that enriches the brain would not exist.

The greatest literature the world has ever seen is, in my judgment, the poetic—the dramatic; that is to say, the literature of fiction in its widest sense. Certainly if the church could have had control, the plays of Shakespeare never would have been written; the literature of the stage could not have existed; most works of fiction, and nearly all poetry, would have perished in the brain. So I think it hardly fair to say that "the Bible has produced the richest and most varied literature the world has ever seen."

Thousands of theological books have been written on thousands of questions of no possible importance. Libraries have been printed on subjects not worth discussing—not worth thinking about—and that will, in a few years, be regarded as puerile by the whole world.

Mr. Peters, in his enthusiasm, asks this question :

" Who raised our great institutions of learning ? Infidels never a stone of them ! "

Stephen Girard founded the best institution of learning, the best charity, the noblest ever founded in this or any other land ; and under the roof built by his wisdom and his wealth many thousands of orphans have been reared, clothed, fed and educated, not only in books, but in avocations, and become happy and useful citizens. Under his will there has been distributed to the poor, fuel to the value of more than $500,000 ; and this distribution goes on year after year.

One of the best observatories in the world was built by the generosity of James Lick, an infidel. I call attention to these two cases simply to show that the gentleman is mistaken, and that he was somewhat carried away by his zeal.

So, too, Mr. Peters takes the ground that " we are indebted to Christianity for our chronology."

According to Christianity this world has been peopled about six thousand years. Christian chronology gives the age of the first man, and then gives the line from father to son down to the flood, and from the flood down to the coming of Christ, showing that men have been upon the earth only about six thousand years. This chronology is infinitely absurd, and I do not believe that there is an intelligent, well-educated Christian in the world, having examined the subject, who will say that the Christian chronology is correct.

Neither can it, I think, truthfully be said that "we are indebted to Christianity for the continuation of history." The best modern historians of whom I have any knowledge are Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, Buckle and Draper.

Neither can I admit that "we are indebted to Christianity for natural philosophy."

I do not deny that some natural philosophers have also been Christians, or, rather, that some Christians have been natural philosophers to the extent that their Christianity permitted. But Lamarck and Humboldt and Darwin and Spencer and Haeckel and Huxley and Tyndall have done far more for natural philosophy than they have for orthodox religion.

Whoever believes in the miraculous must be the

enemy of natural philosophy. To him there is something above nature, liable to interfere with nature. Such a man has two classes of ideas in his mind, each inconsistent with the other. To the extent that he believes in the supernatural he is incapacitated for dealing with the natural, and to that extent fails to be a philosopher. Philosophy does not include the caprice of the Infinite. It is founded on the absolute integrity and invariability of nature.

Neither do I agree with the reverend gentleman when he says that "we are indebted to Christianity for our knowledge of philology."

The church taught for a long time that Hebrew was the first language, and that other languages had been derived from that; and for hundreds and hundreds of years the efforts of philologists were arrested simply because they started with that absurd assumption and believed in the Tower of Babel.

Christianity cannot now take the credit for "metaphysical research." It has always been the enemy of metaphysical research. It never has said to any human being, "Think!" It has always said, "Hear!" It does not ask anybody to investigate. It lays down certain doctrines as absolutely true, and, instead of asking investigation, it threatens every investigator with eternal pain. Metaphysical research is destroy-

ing what has been called Christianity, and Christians have always feared it.

This gentleman makes another mistake, and a very common one. This is his argument: Christian countries are the most intelligent; therefore they owe that intelligence to Christianity. Then the next step is taken. Christianity, being the best, having produced these results, must have been of divine origin.

Let us see what this proves. There was a time when Egypt was the first nation in the world. Could not an Egyptian, at that time have used the same arguments that Mr. Peters uses now, to prove that the religion of Egypt was divine? Could he not then have said: "Egypt is the most intelligent, the most civilized and the richest of all nations; it has been made so by its religion; its religion is, therefore, divine"?

So there was a time when a Hindoo could have made the same argument. Certainly this argument could have been made by a Greek. It could have been repeated by a Roman. And yet Mr. Peters will not admit that the religion of Egypt was divine, or that the mythology of Greece was true, or that Jupiter was in fact a god.

Is it not evident to all that if the churches in Europe

had been institutions of learning; if the domes of cathedrals had been observatories; if priests had been teachers of the facts in nature, the world would have been far in advance of what it is to-day?

Countries depend on something besides their religion for progress. Nations with a good soil can get along quite well with an exceedingly poor religion; and no religion yet has been good enough to give wealth or happiness to human beings where the climate and soil were bad and barren.

Religion supports nobody. It has to be supported. It produces no wheat, no corn; it ploughs no land; it fells no forests. It is a perpetual mendicant. It lives on the labor of others, and then has the arrogance to pretend that it supports the giver.

Mr. Peters makes this exceedingly strange statement: "Every discovery in science, invention and art has been the work of Christian men. Infidels have contributed their share, but never one of them has reached the grandeur of originality."

This, I think, so far as invention is concerned, can be answered with one name—John Ericsson, one of the profoundest agnostics I ever met.

I am almost certain that Humboldt and Goethe were original. Darwin was certainly regarded as such.

I do not wish to differ unnecessarily with Mr. Peters, but I have some doubts about Morse having been the inventor of the telegraph.

Neither can I admit that Christianity abolished slavery. Many of the abolitionists in this country were infidels; many of them were Christians. But the church itself did not stand for liberty. The Quakers, I admit, were, as a rule, on the side of freedom. But the Christians of New England persecuted these Quakers, whipped them from town to town, lacerated their naked backs, and maimed their bodies, not only, but took their lives.

Mr. Peters asks: "What name is there among the world's emancipators after which you cannot write the name 'Christian?'" Well, let me give him a few—Voltaire, Jefferson, Paine, Franklin, Lincoln, Darwin.

Mr. Peters asks: "Why is it that in Christian countries you find the greatest amount of physical and intellectual liberty, the greatest freedom of thought, speech, and action?"

Is this true of all? How about Spain and Portugal? There is more infidelity in France than in Spain, and there is far more liberty in France than in Spain.

There is far more infidelity in England than there

was a century ago, and there is far more liberty than there was a century ago. There is far more infidelity in the United States than there was fifty years ago, and a hundred infidels to-day where there was one fifty years ago ; and there is far more intellectual liberty, far greater freedom of speech and action, than ever before.

A few years ago Italy was a Christian country to the fullest extent. Now there are a thousand times more liberty and a thousand times less religion.

Orthodoxy is dying ; Liberty is growing.

Mr. Ballou, a grandson, or grand-nephew, of Hosea Ballou, seems to have wandered from the faith. As a rule, Christians insist that when one denies the religion of Christian parents he is an exceedingly bad man, but when he denies the religion of parents not Christians, and becomes a Christian, that he is a very faithful, good and loving son.

Mr. Ballou insists that God has the same right to punish us that Nature has, or that the State has. I do not think he understands what I have said. The State ought not to punish for the sake of punishment. The State may imprison, or inflict what is called punishment, first, for its own protection, and, secondly, for the reformation of the punished. If no one could do the State any injury, certainly the

State would have no right to punish under the plea of protection; and if no human being could by any possibility be reformed, then the excuse of reformation could not be given.

Let us apply this: If God be infinite, no one can injure him. Therefore he need not punish anybody or damn anybody or burn anybody for his protection.

Let us take another step. Punishment being justified only on two grounds—that is, the protection of society and the reformation of the punished—how can eternal punishment be justified? In the first place, God does not punish to protect himself, and, in the second place, if the punishment is to be forever, he does not punish to reform the punished. What excuse then is left?

Let us take still another step. If, instead of punishment, we say "consequences," and that every good man has the right to reap the good consequences of good actions, and that every bad man must bear the consequences of bad actions, then you must say to the good: If you stop doing good you will lose the harvest. You must say to the bad: If you stop doing bad you need not increase your burdens. And if it be a fact in Nature that all must reap what they sow, there is neither mercy nor cruelty in this fact, and I

hold no God responsible for it. The trouble with the Christian creed is that God is described as the one who gives rewards and the one who inflicts eternal pain.

There is still another trouble. This God, if infinite, must have known when he created man, exactly who would be eternally damned. What right had he to create men, knowing that they were to be damned?

So much for Mr. Ballou.

The Rev. Dr. Hillier seems to reason in a kind of circle. He takes the ground, in the first place, that "infidelity, Christianity, science, and experience all agree, without the slightest tremor of uncertainty, in the inexorable law that whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." He then takes the ground that, "if we wish to be rid of the harvest, we must not sow the seed; if we would avoid the result, we must remove the cause; the only way to be rid of hell is to stop doing evil; that this, and this only, is the way to abolish an eternal penitentiary."

Very good; but that is not the point. The real thing under discussion is this: Is this life a state of probation, and if a man fails to live a good life here, will he have no opportunity for reformation in another world, if there be one? Can he cease to do

evil in the eternal penitentiary? and if he does, can he be pardoned—can he be released?

It is admitted that man must bear the consequences of his acts. If the consequences are good, then the acts are good. If the consequences are bad, the acts are bad. Through experience we find that certain acts tend to unhappiness and others to happiness.

Now, the only question is whether we have wisdom enough to live in harmony with our conditions here; and if we fail here, will we have an opportunity of reforming in another world? If not, then the few years that we live here determine whether we shall be angels or devils forever.

It seems to me, if there be another life, that in that life men may do good, and men may do evil; and if they may do good it seems to me that they may reform.

I do not see why God, if there be one, should lose all interest in his children, simply because they leave this world and go where he is. Is it possible that an infinite God does all for his children here, in this poor ignorant world, that it is possible for him to do, and that if he fails to reform them here, nothing is left to do except to make them eternal convicts?

The Rev. Mr. Haldeman mistakes my position. I do not admit that "an infinite God, as revealed in Nature, has allowed men to grow up under conditions

which no ordinary mortal can look at in all their concentrated agony and not break his heart."

I do not confess that God reveals himself in Nature as an infinite God, without mercy. I do not admit that there is an infinite Being anywhere responsible for the agonies and tears, for the barbarities and horrors of this life. I cannot believe that there is in the universe a Being with power to prevent these things. I hold no God responsible. I attribute neither cruelty nor mercy to Nature. Nature neither weeps nor rejoices. I cannot believe that this world, as it now is, as it has been, was created by an infinitely wise, powerful, and benevolent God. But it is far better that we should all go down "with souls unsatisfied" to the dreamless grave, to the tongueless silence of the voiceless dust, than that countless millions of human souls should suffer forever.

Eternal sleep is better than eternal pain. Eternal punishment is eternal revenge, and can be inflicted only by an eternal monster.

Mr. George A. Locey endeavors to put his case in an extremely small compass, and satisfies himself with really one question, and that is: "If a man in good health is stricken with disease, is assured that a physician can cure him, but refuses to take the medicine and dies, ought there to be any escape?"

He concludes that the physician has done his duty; that the patient was obdurate and suffered the penalty.

The application he makes is this:

"The Christian's 'tidings of great joy' is the message that the Great Physician tendered freely. Its acceptance is a cure certain, and a life of eternal happiness the reward. If the soul accepts, are they not tidings of great joy; and if the soul rejects, is it not unreasonable on the part of Colonel Ingersoll to try and sneak out and throw the blame on God?"

The answer to this seems easy. The cases are not parallel. If an infinite God created us all, he knew exactly what we would do. If he gave us free will it does not change the result, because he knew how we would use the free will.

Now, if he knew that billions upon billions would refuse to take the remedy, and consequently would suffer eternal pain, why create them? There would have been much less misery in the world had he left them dust.

What right has a God to make a failure? Why should he change dust into a sentient being, knowing that that being was to be the heir of endless agony?

If the supposed physician had created the patient

who refused to take the medicine, and had so created him that he knew he would refuse to take it, the cases might be parallel.

According to the orthodox creed, millions are to be damned who never heard of the medicine or of the "Great Physician."

There is one thing said by the Rev. Mr. Talmage that I hardly think he could have intended. Possibly there has been a misprint. It is the following paragraph:

"Who" (speaking of Jesus) "has such an eye to our need; such a lip to kiss away our sorrow; such a hand to snatch us out of the fire; *such a foot to trample our enemies;* such a heart to embrace all our necessities?"

What does the reverend gentleman mean by "*such a foot to trample our enemies*"?

This, to me, is a terrible line. But it is in accordance with the history of the church. In the name of its founder it has "trampled on its enemies," and beneath its cruel feet have perished the noblest of the world.

The Rev. J. Benson Hamilton, of Brooklyn, comes into this discussion with a great deal of heat and considerable fury. He states that "Infidelity is the creed of prosperity, but when sickness or trouble or

sorrow comes he" (meaning the infidel) "does not paw nor mock nor cry 'Ha! ha!' He sneaks and cringes like a whipped cur, and trembles and whines and howls."

The spirit of Mr. Hamilton is not altogether admirable. He seems to think that a man establishes the truth of his religion by being brave, or demonstrates its falsity by trembling in the presence of death.

Thousands of people have died for false religions and in honor of false gods. Their heroism did not prove the truth of the religion, but it did prove the sincerity of their convictions.

A great many murderers have been hanged who exhibited on the scaffold the utmost contempt of death; and yet this courage exhibited by dying murderers has never been appealed to in justification of murder.

The reverend gentleman tells again the story of the agonies endured by Thomas Paine when dying; tells us that he then said that he wished his work had been thrown into the fire, and that if the devil ever had any agency in any work he had in the writing of that book (meaning "The Age of Reason,") and that he frequently asked the Lord Jesus to have mercy upon him.

Of course there is not a word of truth in this story. Its falsity has been demonstrated thousands and thousands of times, and yet ministers of the Gospel go right on repeating it just the same.

So this gentleman tells us that Voltaire was accustomed to close his letters with the words, "Crush the wretch!" (meaning Christ). This is not so. He referred to superstition, to religion, not to Christ.

This gentleman also says that "Voltaire was the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating and blaspheming God; that he complained that he was abandoned by God; that when he died his friends fled from the room, declaring the sight too terrible to be endured."

There is not one word of truth in this. Everybody who has read the life of Voltaire knows that he died with the utmost serenity.

Let me tell you how Voltaire died.

He was an old man of eighty-four. He had been surrounded by the comforts of life. He was a man of wealth—of genius. Among the literary men of the world he stood first. God had allowed him to have the appearance of success. His last years were filled with the intoxication of flattery. He stood at the summit of his age. The priests became anxious. They began to fear that God would for-

get, in a multiplicity of business, to make a terrible example of Voltaire.

Toward the last of May, 1788, it was whispered in Paris that Voltaire was dying. Upon the fences of expectation gathered the unclean birds of superstition, impatiently waiting for their prey.

"Two days before his death his nephew went to seek the Curé of St. Sulpice and the Abbé Gautier, and brought them into his uncle's sick-chamber, who was informed that they were there.

"'Ah, well,' said Voltaire; 'give them my compliments and my thanks.'

"The abbé spoke some words to Voltaire, exhorting him to patience. The Curé of St. Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked Voltaire, lifting his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sick man pushed one of his hands against the curé's coif shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side:

"'Let me die in peace!'

"The curé seemingly considered his person soiled and his coif dishonored by the touch of the philosopher. He made the nurse give him a little brushing and went out with the Abbé Gautier.

"He expired," says Wagniere, "on the 30th of

May, 1788, at about a quarter past eleven at night, with the most perfect tranquillity.

"Ten minutes before his last breath he took the hand of Morand, his *valet-de-chambre*, who was watching by him, pressed it and said: 'Adieu, my dear Morand. I am gone!'

"These were his last words."

From this death, so simple and serene, so natural and peaceful—from these words so utterly destitute of cant or dramatic touch—all the frightful pictures, all the despairing utterances have been drawn and made. From these materials, and from these alone, have been constructed all the shameless calumnies about the death of this great and wonderful man.

Voltaire was the intellectual autocrat of his time. From his throne at the foot of the Alps he pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. He was the pioneer of his century. He was the assassin of superstition. Through the shadows of faith and fable; through the darkness of myth and miracle; through the midnight of Christianity; through the blackness of bigotry; past cathedral and dungeon; past rack and stake; past altar and throne, he carried, with chivalric hands, the sacred torch of Reason.

Let me also tell you about the death of Thomas

Paine. After the publication of his "Rights of Man" and "The Age of Reason", every falsehood that malignity could coin and malice pass, was given to the world. On his return to America, although Thomas Jefferson, another infidel, was President, it was hardly safe for Paine to appear in the public streets.

Under the very flag he had helped to put in heaven, his rights were not respected. Under the Constitution that he had first suggested, his life was insecure. He had helped to give liberty to more than three millions of his fellow-citizens, and they were willing to deny it unto him.

He was deserted, ostracized, shunned, maligned and cursed. But he maintained his integrity. He stood by the convictions of his mind, and never for one moment did he hesitate or waver. He died almost alone.

The moment he died the pious commenced manufacturing horrors for his death-bed. They had his chamber filled with devils rattling chains, and these ancient falsehoods are certified to by the clergy even of the present day.

The truth is that Thomas Paine died as he had lived. Some ministers were impolite enough to visit him against his will. Several of them he ordered

from his room. A couple of Catholic priests, in all the meekness of arrogance, called that they might enjoy the agonies of the dying friend of man. Thomas Paine, rising in his bed, the few moments of expiring life fanned into flame by the breath of indignation, had the goodness to curse them both.

His physician, who seems to have been a meddling fool, just as the cold hand of Death was touching the patriot's heart, whispered in the dulled ear of the dying man: "Do you believe, or do you wish to believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?"

And the reply was: "I have no wish to believe on that subject."

These were the last remembered words of Thomas Paine. He died as serenely as ever mortal passed away. He died in the full possession of his mind, and on the brink and edge of death proclaimed the doctrines of his life.

Every philanthropist, every believer in human liberty, every lover of the great Republic, should feel under obligation to Thomas Paine for the splendid services rendered by him in the darkest days of the American Revolution. In the midnight of Valley Forge, "The Crisis" was the first star that glittered in the wide horizon of despair.

We should remember that Thomas Paine was the

first man to write these words : "The United States of America."

The Rev. Mr. Hamilton seems to take a kind of joy in imagining what infidels will suffer when they come to die, and he writes as though he would like to be present.

For my part I hope that all the sons and daughters of men will die in peace ; that they will pass away as easily as twilight fades to night.

Of course when I said that "Christianity did not bring tidings of great joy, but a message of eternal grief," I meant orthodox Christianity ; and when I said that "Christianity fills the future with fire and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, in which most of the children of men were to be imprisoned forever," I was giving what I understood to be the Evangelical belief on that subject.

If the churches have given up the doctrine of eternal punishment, then for one I am delighted, and I shall feel that what little I have done toward that end has not been done in vain.

The Rev. Mr. Hamilton, enjoying my dying agony in imagination, says : "Let the world wait but for a few years at the most, when Death's icy fingers feel for the heartstrings of the boaster, and as most of

his like who have gone before him have done, he will sing another strain."

How shall I characterize the spirit that could prompt the writing of such a sentence?

The reverend gentleman "loves his enemies," and yet he is filled with glee when he thinks of the agonies I shall endure when Death's icy fingers feel for the strings of my heart! Yet I have done him no harm.

He then quotes, as being applicable to me, a passage from the prophet Isaiah, commencing: "The vile person will speak villainy."

Is this passage applicable only to me?

The Rev. Mr. Holloway is not satisfied with the "Christmas Sermon." For his benefit I repeat, in another form, what the "Christmas Sermon" contains:

If orthodox Christianity teaches that this life is a period of probation, that we settle here our eternal destiny, and that all who have heard the Gospel and who have failed to believe it are to be eternally lost, then I say that Christianity did not "bring tidings of great joy," but a Message of Eternal Grief. And if the orthodox churches are still preaching the doctrine of Endless Pain, then I say it would be far better if every church crumbled into dust than that

such preaching and such teaching should be continued.

It would be far better yet, however, if the ministers could be converted and their congregations enlightened.

I admit that the orthodox churches preach some things beside hell; but if they do not believe in the eternity of punishment they ought publicly to change their creeds.

I admit, also, that the average minister advises his congregation to be honest and to treat all with kindness, and I admit that many of these ministers fail to follow their own advice when they make what they call "replies" to me.

Of course there are many good things about the church. To the extent that it is charitable, or rather to the extent that it causes charity, it is good. To the extent that it causes men and women to lead moral lives it is good. But to the extent that it fills the future with fear it is bad. To the extent that it convinces any human being that there is any God who not only can, but will, inflict eternal torments on his own children, it is bad.

And such teaching does tend to blight humanity. Such teaching does pollute the imagination of childhood. Such teaching does furrow the cheeks of the

best and tenderest with tears. Such teaching does rob old age of all its joy, and covers every cradle with a curse!

The Rev. Mr. Holloway seems to be extremely familiar with God. He says: "God seems to have delayed his advent through all the ages to give unto the world the fullest opportunity to do all that the human mind could suggest for the weal of the race."

According to this gentleman, God just delayed his advent for the purpose of seeing what the world would do, *knowing all the time exactly what would be done.*

Let us make a suggestion: If the orthodox creed be true, then all people became tainted or corrupted or depraved, or in some way spoiled by what is known as "Original Sin."

According to the Old Testament, these people kept getting worse and worse. It does not seem that Jehovah made any effort to improve them, but he patiently waited for about fifteen hundred years without having established any church, without having given them a Bible, and then he drowned all but eight persons.

Now, those eight persons were also depraved. The taint of Original Sin was also in their blood.

It seems to me that Jehovah made a mistake. He should also have killed the remaining eight, and started new, kept the serpent out of his garden, and furnished the first pair with a Bible and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.

The Rev. Dr. Tyler takes it for granted that all charity and goodness are the children of Christianity. This is a mistake. All the virtues were in the world long before Christ came. Probably Mr. Tyler will be convinced by the words of Christ himself. He will probably remember the story of the Good Samaritan, and if he does he will see that it is exactly in point. The Good Samaritan was not a Hebrew. He was not one of "the chosen people." He was a poor, "miserable heathen," who knew nothing about the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and who had never heard of the "scheme of salvation." And yet, according to Christ, he was far more charitable than the Levites—the priests of Jehovah, the highest of "the chosen people." Is it not perfectly plain from this story that charity was in the world before Christianity was established?

A great deal has been said about asylums and hospitals, as though the Christians are entitled to great credit on that score. If Dr. Tyler will read what is said in the British Encyclopædia, under the head of

"Mental Diseases," he will find that the Egyptians treated the insane with the utmost kindness, and that they called reason back to its throne by the voice of music; that the temples were resorted to by crowds of the insane; and that "whatever gifts of nature or productions of art were calculated to impress the imagination were there united. Games and recreations were instituted in the temples. Groves and gardens surrounded these holy retreats. Gayly decorated boats sometimes transported patients to breathe the pure breezes of the Nile."

So in ancient Greece it is said that "from the hands of the priest the cure of the disordered mind first passed into the domain of medicine, with the philosophers. Pythagoras is said to have employed music for the cure of mental diseases. The order of the day for his disciples exhibits a profound knowledge of the relations of body and mind. The early morning was divided between gentle exercise, conversation and music. Then came conversation, followed by gymnastic exercise and a temperate diet. Afterward, a bath and supper with a sparing allowance of wine; then reading, music and conversation concluded the day."

So "Asclepiades was celebrated for his treatment of mental disorders. He recommended that bodily

restraint should be avoided as much as possible." It is also stated that "the philosophy and arts of Greece spread to Rome, and the first special treatise on insanity is that of Celsus, which distinguishes varieties of insanity and their proper treatment."

"Over the arts and sciences of Greece and Rome the errors and ignorance of the Middle Ages gradually crept, until they enveloped them in a cloud worse than Egyptian darkness. The insane were again consigned to the miracle-working ordinances of priests or else totally neglected. Idiots and imbeciles were permitted to go clotheless and homeless. The frantic and furious were chained in lonesome dungeons and exhibited for money, like wild beasts. The monomaniacs became, according to circumstance, the objects of superstitious horror or reverence. They were regarded as possessed with demons and subjected either to priestly exorcism, or cruelly destroyed as wizards and witches. This cruel treatment of the insane continued with little or no alleviation down to the end of the last century in all the civilized countries of Europe."

Let me quote a description of these Christian asylums.

"Public asylums indeed existed in most of the metropolitan cities of Europe, but the insane were

more generally, if at all troublesome, confined in jails, where they were chained in the lowest dungeons or made the butts and menials of the most debased criminals. In public asylums the inmates were confined in cellars, isolated in cages, chained to floors or walls. These poor victims were exhibited to the public like wild beasts. They were often killed by the ignorance and brutality of their keepers."

I call particular attention to the following paragraph: "Such was the state of the insane generally throughout Europe at the commencement of this century. Such it continued to be in England so late as 1815 and in Ireland as 1817, as revealed by the inquiries of parliamentary commissions in those years respectively."

Dr. Tyler is entirely welcome to all the comfort these facts can give.

Not only were the Greeks and Romans and Egyptians far in advance of the Christians in the treatment of the mentally diseased, but even the Mohammedans were in advance of the Christians about 700 years, and in addition to this they treated their lunatics with great kindness.

The temple of Diana of Ephesus was a refuge for insolvent debtors, and the Thesium was a refuge for slaves.

Again, I say that hundreds of years before the establishment of Christianity there were in India not only hospitals and asylums for people, but even for animals. The great mistake of the Christian clergy is that they attribute all goodness to Christianity. They have always been engaged in maligning human nature—in attacking the human heart—in efforts to destroy all natural passions.

Perfect maxims for the conduct of life were uttered and repeated in India and China hundreds and hundreds of years before the Christian era. Every virtue was lauded and every vice denounced. All the good that Christianity has in it came from the human heart. Everything in that system of religion came from this world; and in it you will find not only the goodness of man, but the imperfections of man—not only the love of man, but the malice of man.

Let me tell you why the Christians for so many centuries neglected or abused the insane. They believed the New Testament, and honestly supposed that the insane were filled with devils.

In regard to the contest between Dr. Buckley, who, as I understand it, is a doctor of theology—and I should think such theology stood in need of a doctor—and the *Telegram*, I have nothing to say. There is only one side to that contest; and so far

as the Doctor heretofore criticised what is known as the "Christmas Sermon," I have answered him, leaving but very little to which I care to reply in his last article.

Dr. Buckley, like many others, brings forward names instead of reasons—instead of arguments. Milton, Pascal, Elizabeth Fry, John Howard, and Michael Faraday are not arguments. They are only names; and, instead of giving the names, Dr. Buckley should give the reasons advanced by those whose names he pronounces.

Jonathan Edwards may have been a good man, but certainly his theology was infamous. So Father Mathew was a good man, but it was impossible for him to be good enough to convince Dr. Buckley of the doctrine of the "Real Presence."

Milton was a very good man, and he described God as a kind of brigadier-general, put the angels in uniform and had regular battles; but Milton's goodness can by no possibility establish the truth of his poetical and absurd vagaries.

All the self-denial and goodness in the world do not even tend to prove the existence of the supernatural or of the miraculous. Millions and millions of the most devoted men could not, by their devotion, substantiate the inspiration of the Scriptures.

There are, however, some misstatements in Dr. Buckley's article that ought not to be passed over in silence.

The first is to the effect that I was invited to write an article for the *North American Review*, Judge Jeremiah Black to reply, and that Judge Black was improperly treated.

Now, it is true that I was invited to write an article, and did write one; but I did not know at the time who was to reply. It is also true that Judge Black did reply, and that my article and his reply appeared in the same number of the *Review*.

Dr. Buckley alleges that the *North American Review* gave me an opportunity to review the Judge, but denied to Judge Black an opportunity to respond. This is without the slightest foundation in fact. Mr. Metcalf, who at that time was manager of the *Review*, is still living and will tell the facts. Personally I had nothing to do with it, one way or the other. I did not regard Judge Black's reply as formidable, and was not only willing that he should be heard again, but anxious that he should.

So much for that.

As to the debate, with Dr. Field and Mr. Gladstone, I leave them to say whether they were or were not fairly treated. Dr. Field, by his candor, by his fair-

ness, and by the manly spirit he exhibited won my respect and love.

Most ministers imagine that any man who differs from them is a blasphemer. This word seems to leap unconsciously from their lips. They cannot imagine that another man loves liberty as much and with as sincere devotion as they love God. They cannot imagine that another prizes liberty above all gods, even if gods exist. They cannot imagine that any mind is so that it places Justice above all persons, a mind that cannot conceive even of a God who is not bound to do justice.

If God exists, above him, in eternal calm, is the figure of Justice.

Neither can some ministers understand a man who regards Jehovah and Jupiter as substantially the same, with this exception—that he thinks far more of Jupiter, because Jupiter had at least some human feelings.

I do not understand that a man can be guilty of blasphemy who states his honest thoughts in proper language, his object being, not to torture the feelings of others, but simply to give his thought—to find and establish the truth.

Dr. Buckley makes a charge that he ought to have known to be without foundation. Speaking of my-

self, he said: "In him the laws to prevent the circulation of obscene publications through the mails have found their most vigorous opponent."

It is hardly necessary for me to say that this is untrue. The facts are that an effort was made to classify obscene literature with what the pious call "blasphemous and immoral works." A petition was forwarded to Congress to amend the law so that the literature of Freethought could not be thrown from the mails, asking that, if no separation could be made, the law should be repealed.

It was said that I had signed this petition, and I certainly should have done so had it been presented to me. The petition was absolutely proper.

A few years ago I found the petition, and discovered that while it bore my name it had never been signed by me. But for the purposes of this answer I am perfectly willing that the signature should be regarded as genuine, as there is nothing in the petition that should not have been granted.

The law as it stood was opposed by the Liberal League—but not a member of that society was in favor of the circulation of obscene literature; but they did think that the privacy of the mails had been violated, and that it was of the utmost importance to maintain the inviolability of the postal service.

I disagreed with these people, and favored the destruction of obscene literature not only, but that it be made a criminal offence to send it through the mails. As a matter of fact I drew up resolutions to that effect that were passed. Afterward they were changed, or some others were passed, and I resigned from the League on that account.

Nothing can be more absurd than that I was, directly or indirectly, or could have been, interested in the circulation of obscene publications through the mails; and I will pay a premium of $1,000 a word for each and every word I ever said or wrote in favor of sending obscene publications through the mails.

I might use much stronger language. I might follow the example of Dr. Buckley himself. But I think I have said enough to satisfy all unprejudiced people that the charge is absurdly false.

Now, as to the eulogy of whiskey. It gives me a certain pleasure to read that even now, and I believe the readers of the *Telegram* would like to read it once more; so here it is:

"I send you some of the most wonderful whiskey that ever drove the skeleton from a feast or painted landscapes in the brain of man. It is the mingled souls of wheat and corn. In it you will find the

sunshine and the shadow that chased each other over the billowy fields; the breath of June; the carol of the lark; the dews of night; the wealth of summer and autumn's rich content, all golden with imprisoned light. Drink it and you will hear the voices of men and maidens singing the 'Harvest Home,' mingled with the laughter of children. Drink it and you will feel within your blood the star-lit dawns, the dreamy, tawny dusks of many perfect days. For forty years this liquid joy has been within the happy staves of oak, longing to touch the lips of men."

I re-quote this for the reason that Dr. Buckley, who is not very accurate, made some mistakes in his version.

Now, in order to show the depth of degradation to which I have sunk in this direction, I will confess that I also wrote a eulogy of tobacco, and here it is:

"Nearly four centuries ago Columbus, the adventurous, in the blessed island of Cuba, saw happy people with rolled leaves between their lips. Above their heads were little clouds of smoke. Their faces were serene, and in their eyes was the autumnal heaven of content. These people were kind, innocent, gentle and loving.

"The climate of Cuba is the friendship of the earth and air, and of this climate the sacred leaves were born—the leaves that breed in the mind of him who uses them the cloudless, happy days in which they grew.

"These leaves make friends, and celebrate with gentle rites the vows of peace. They have given consolation to the world. They are the companions of the lonely—the friends of the imprisoned, of the exile, of workers in mines, of fellers of forests, of sailors on the desolate seas. They are the givers of strength and calm to the vexed and wearied minds of those who build with thought and dream the temples of the soul.

"They tell of hope and rest. They smooth the wrinkled brows of pain—drive fears and strange misshapen dreads from out the mind and fill the heart with rest and peace. Within their magic warp and woof some potent gracious spell imprisoned lies, that, when released by fire, doth softly steal within the fortress of the brain and bind in sleep the captured sentinels of care and grief.

"These leaves are the friends of the fireside, and their smoke, like incense, rises from myriads of happy homes. Cuba is the smile of the sea."

There are some people so constituted that there is

no room in the heaven of their minds for the butterflies and moths of fancy to spread their wings. Everything is taken in solemn and stupid earnest. Such men would hold Shakespeare responsible for what Falstaff said about "sack," and for Mrs. Quickly's notions of propriety.

There is an old Greek saying which is applicable here: "In the presence of human stupidity, even the gods stand helpless."

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, lacked all sense of humor. He preached a sermon on "The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes." He insisted that they were caused by the wickedness of man, and that the only way to cure them was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The man who does not carry the torch of Humor is always in danger of falling into the pit of Absurdity.

The Rev. Charles Deems, pastor of the Church of the Strangers, contributes his part to the discussion.

He took a text from John, as follows: "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

According to the orthodox creed of the Rev. Dr. Deems all have committed sin, and consequently all are of the devil. The Doctor is not a metaphysician. He does not care to play at sleight of hand with words. He stands on bed-rock, and he asserts that the devil is no Persian myth, but a personality, who works unhindered by the limitations of a physical body, and gets human personalities to aid him in his works.

According to the text, it seems that the devil was a sinner from the beginning. I suppose that must mean from his beginning, or from the beginning of things. According to Dr. Deems' creed, his God is the Creator of all things, and consequently must have been the Creator of the devil. According to the Scriptures the devil is the father of lies, and Dr. Deems' God is the father of the devil—that is to say, the grandfather of lies. This strikes me as almost "blasphemous."

The Doctor also tells us "that Jesus believed as much in the personality of the devil as in that of Herod or Pilate or John or Peter."

That I admit. There is not the slightest doubt, if the New Testament be true, that Christ believed in a personal devil—a devil with whom he had conversations; a devil who took him to the pinnacle of the

Temple and endeavored to induce him to leap to the earth below.

Of course he believed in a personal devil. Not only so; he believed in thousands of personal devils. He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene. He cast a legion of devils out of the man in the tombs, or, rather, made a bargain with these last-mentioned devils that they might go into a drove or herd of swine, if they would leave the man.

I not only admit that Christ believed in devils, but he believed that some devils were deaf and dumb, and so declared.

Dr. Deems is right, and I hope he will defend against all comers the integrity of the New Testament.

The Doctor, however, not satisfied exactly with what he finds in the New Testament, draws a little on his own imagination. He says:

"The devil is an organizing, imperial intellect, vindictive, sharp, shrewd, persevering, the aim of whose works is to overthrow the authority of God's law."

How does the Doctor know that the devil has an organizing, imperial intellect? How does he know that he is vindictive and sharp and shrewd and persevering?

If the devil has an "imperial intellect," why does he attempt the impossible?

Robert Burns shocked Scotland by saying of the devil, or, rather, to the devil, that he was sorry for him, and hoped he would take a thought and mend.

Dr. Deems has gone far in advance of Burns. For a clergyman he seems to be exceedingly polite. Speaking of the "Arch Enemy of God"—of that "organizing, imperial intellect who is seeking to undermine the church"—the Doctor says:

"The devil may be conceded to be sincere."

It has been said:

"An honest God is the noblest work of man," and it may now be added: A sincere devil is the noblest work of Dr. Deems.

But, with all the devil's smartness, sharpness, and shrewdness, the Doctor says that he "cannot write a book; that he cannot deliver lectures" (like myself, I suppose), "edit a newspaper" (like the editor of the *Telegram*), "or make after-dinner speeches; but he can get his servants to do these things for him."

There is one thing in the Doctor's address that I feel like correcting (I quote from the *Telegram's* report):

"Dr. Deems showed at length how the Son of God, the Christ of the Bible—*not the Christ of the lecture*

platform caricatures—is operating to overcome all these works."

I take it for granted that he refers to what he supposes I have said about Christ, and, for fear that he may not have read it, I give it here :

"And let me say here, once for all, that for the man Christ I have infinite respect. Let me say, once for all, that the place where man has died for man is holy ground. And let me say, once for all, that to that great and serene man I gladly pay, the tribute of my admiration and my tears. He was a reformer in his day. He was an infidel in his time. He was regarded as a blasphemer, and his life was destroyed by hypocrites, who have, in all ages, done what they could to trample freedom and manhood out of the human mind. Had I lived at that time I would have been his friend, and should he come again he will not find a better friend than I will be. That is for the man. For the theological creation I have a different feeling."

I have not answered each one who has attacked by name. Neither have I mentioned those who have agreed with me. But I do take this occasion to thank all, irrespective of their creeds, who have manfully advocated the right of free speech, and who have upheld the *Telegram* in the course it has taken.

I thank all who have said a kind word for me, and I also feel quite grateful to those who have failed to say unkind words. Epithets are not arguments. To abuse is not to convince. Anger is stupid and malice illogical.

And, after all that has appeared by way of reply, I still insist that orthodox Christianity did not come with "tidings of great joy," but with a message of eternal grief.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

New York, February 5, 1892.

SUICIDE OF JUDGE NORMILE.

SUICIDE OF JUDGE NORMILE.*

Question. Have you read an article in the *Western Watchman*, entitled "Suicide of Judge Normile"? If so, what is your opinion of it?

Answer. I have read the article, and I think the spirit in which it is written is in exact accord with the creed, with the belief, that prompted it.

In this article the writer speaks not only of Judge Normile, but of Henry D'Arcy, and begins by saying that a Catholic community had been shocked, but that as a matter of fact the Catholics had no right "to feel special concern in the life or death of either," for the reason, "that both had ceased to be Catholics, and had lived as infidels and scoffers."

According to the Catholic creed all infidels and scoffers are on the direct road to eternal pain; and yet, if the *Watchman* is to be believed, Catholics have no right to have special concern for the fate of such people, even after their death.

*A reply to the *Western Watchman*, published in the *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, Sept. 1, 1892.

The church has always proclaimed that it was seeking the lost—that it was trying in every way to convert the infidels and save the scoffers—that it cared less for the ninety-nine sheep safe in the fold than for the one that had strayed. We have been told that God so loved infidels and scoffers, that he came to this poor world and gave his life that they might be saved. But now we are told by the *Western Watchman* that the church, said to have been founded by Christ, has no right to feel any special concern about the fate of infidels and scoffers.

Possibly the *Watchman* only refers to the infidels and scoffers who were once Catholics.

If the New Testament is true, St. Peter was at one time a Christian; that is to say, a good Catholic, and yet he fell from grace and not only denied his Master, but went to the extent of swearing that he did not know him; that he never had made his acquaintance. And yet, this same Peter was taken back and became the rock on which the Catholic Church is supposed to rest.

Are the Catholics of St. Louis following the example of Christ, when they publicly declare that they care nothing for the fate of one who left the church and who died in his sins?

The *Watchman*, in order to show that it was simply doing its duty, and was not actuated by hatred or malice, assures us as follows: "A warm personal friendship existed between D'Arcy and Normile and the managers of this paper." What would the *Watchman* have said if these men had been the personal enemies of the managers of that paper? Two warm personal friends, once Catholics, had gone to hell; but the managers of the *Watchman*, "warm personal friends" of the dead, had no right to feel any special concern about these friends in the flames of perdition. One would think that pity had changed to piety.

Another wonderful statement is that "both of these men determined to go to hell, if there was a hell, and to forego the joys of heaven, if there was a heaven."

Admitting that heaven and hell exist, that heaven is a good place, and that hell, to say the least, is, and eternally will be, unpleasant, why should any sane man unalterably determine to go to hell? It is hard to think of any reason, unless he was afraid of meeting those Catholics in heaven who had been his "warm personal friends" in this world. The truth is that no one wishes to be unhappy in this or any other country. The truth is that Henry D'Arcy

and Judge Normile both became convinced that the Catholic Church is of human origin, that its creed is not true, that it is the enemy of progress, and the foe of freedom. It may be that they were in part led to these conclusions by the conduct of their "warm personal friends."

It is claimed that these men, Henry D'Arcy and Judge Normile "studied" to convince themselves "that there was no God;" that "they went back to Paganism and lived among the ancients," and that they soon revelled "in the grossness of Paganism." If they went back to Paganism, they certainly found plenty of gods. The Pagans filled heaven and earth with deities. The Catholics have only three, while the Pagans had hundreds. And yet there were some very good Pagans. By associating with Socrates and Plato one would not necessarily become a groveling wretch. Zeno was not altogether abominable. He would compare favorably, at least, with the average pope. Aristotle was not entirely despicable, although wrong, it may be, in many things. Epicurus was temperate, frugal and serene. He perceived the beauty of use, and celebrated the marriage of virtue and joy. He did not teach his disciples to revel in grossness, although his maligners have made this charge. Cicero was a Pagan, and

yet he uttered some very sublime and generous sentiments. Among other things, he said this: "When we say that we should love Romans, but not foreigners, we destroy the bond of universal brotherhood and drive from our hearts charity and justice."

Suppose a Pagan had written about "two warm personal friends" of his, who had joined the Catholic Church, and suppose he had said this: "Although our two warm personal friends have both died by their own hands, and although both have gone to the lowest hell, and are now suffering inconceivable agonies, we have no right to feel any special concern about them or about their sufferings; and, to speak frankly, we care nothing for their agonies, nothing for their tears, and we mention them only to keep other Pagans from joining that blasphemous and ignorant church. Both of our friends were raised as Pagans, both were educated in our holy religion, and both had read the works of our greatest and wisest authors, and yet they fell into apostasy, and studied day and night, in season and out of season, to convince themselves that a young carpenter of Palestine was in fact, Jupiter, whom we call Stator, the creator, the sustainer and governor of all."

It is probable that the editor of the *Watchman*

was perfectly conscientious in his attack on the dead. Nothing but a sense of religious duty could induce any man to attack the character of a "warm personal friend," and to say that although the friend was in hell, he felt no special concern as to his fate.

The *Watchman* seems to think that it is hardly probable or possible that a sane Catholic should become an infidel. People of every religion feel substantially in this way. It is probable that the Mohammedan is of the opinion that no sane believer in the religion of Islam could possibly become a Catholic. Probably there are no sane Mohammedans. I do not know.

Now, it seems to me, that when a sane Catholic reads the history of his church, of the Inquisition, of centuries of flame and sword, of philosophers and thinkers tortured, flayed and burned by the "Bride of God," and of all the cruelties of Christian years, he may reasonably come to the conclusion that the Church of Rome is not the best possible church in this, the best possible of all worlds.

It would hardly impeach his sanity if, after reading the history of superstition, he should denounce the Hierarchy, from priest to pope. The truth is, the real opinions of all men are perfectly honest no

matter whether they are for or against the Catholic creed. All intelligent people are intellectually hospitable. Every man who knows something of the operations of his own mind is absolutely certain that his wish has not, to his knowledge, influenced his judgment. He may admit that his wish has influenced his speech, but he must certainly know that it has not affected his judgment.

In other words, a man cannot cheat himself in a game of solitaire and really believe that he has won the game. No matter what the appearance of the cards may be, he knows whether the game was lost or won. So, men may say that their judgment is a certain way, and they may so affirm in accordance with their wish, but neither the wish, nor the declaration can affect the real judgment. So, a man must know whether he believes a certain creed or not, or, at least, what the real state of his mind is. When a man tells me that he believes in the supernatural, in the miraculous,and in the inspiration of the Scriptures, I take it for granted that he is telling the truth, although it seems impossible to me that the man could reach that conclusion. When another tells me that he does not know whether there is a Supreme Being or not, but that he does not believe in the supernatural, and is perfectly satisfied

that the Scriptures are for the most part false and barbarous, I implicitly believe every word he says.

I admit cheerfully that there are many millions of men and women who believe what to me seems impossible and infinitely absurd; and, undoubtedly, what I believe seems to them equally impossible.

Let us give to others the liberty which we claim for ourselves.

The *Watchman* seems to think that unbelief, especially when coupled with what they call "the sins of the flesh," is the lowest possible depth, and tells us that "robbers may be devout," "murderers penitent," and "drunkards reverential."

In some of these statements the *Watchman* is probably correct. There have been "devout robbers." There have been gentlemen of the highway, agents of the road, who carried sacred images, who bowed at holy shrines for the purpose of securing success. For many centuries the devout Catholics robbed the Jews. The devout Ferdinand and Isabella were great robbers. A great many popes have indulged in this theological pastime, not to speak of the rank and file. Yes, the *Watchman* is right. There is nothing in robbery that necessarily interferes with devotion.

There have been penitent murderers, and most

murderers, unless impelled by a religious sense of duty to God, have been penitent. David, with dying breath, advised his son to murder the old friends of his father. He certainly was not penitent. Undoubtedly Torquemada murdered without remorse, and Calvin burned his "warm personal friend" to gain the applause of God. Philip the Second was a murderer, not penitent, because he deemed it his duty. The same may be said of the Duke of Alva, and of thousands of others.

Robert Burns was not, according to his own account, strictly virtuous, and yet I like him better than I do those who planned and carried into bloody execution the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Undoubtedly murderers have been penitent. A man in California cut the throat of a woman, although she begged for mercy, saying at the same time that she was not prepared to die. He cared nothing for her prayers. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. He made a motion for a new trial. This was denied. He appealed to the governor, but the executive refused to interfere. Then he became penitent and experienced religion. On the scaffold he remarked that he was going to heaven; that his only regret was that he would not meet the woman he had murdered, as she was not a Christian

when she died. Undoubtedly murderers can be penitent.

An old Spaniard was dying. He sent for a priest to administer the last sacraments of the church. The priest told him that he must forgive all his enemies. "I have no enemies," said the dying man, "I killed the last one three weeks ago." Undoubtedly murderers can be penitent.

So, I admit that drunkards have been pious and reverential, and I might add, honest and generous.

Some good Catholics and some good Protestants have enjoyed a hospitable glass, and there have been priests who used the blood of the grape for other than a sacramental purpose. Even Luther, a good Catholic in his day, a reformer, a Doctor of Divinity, gave to the world this couplet:

> "Who loves not woman, wine and song,
> Will live a fool his whole life long."

The *Watchman*, in effect, says that a devout robber is better than an infidel; that a penitent murderer is superior to a freethinker, in the sight of God.

Another curious thing in this article is that after sending both men to hell, the *Watchman* says: "As to their moral habits we know nothing."

It may then be taken for granted, if these "warm personal friends" knew nothing against the dead,

that their lives were, at least, what the church calls moral. We know, if we know anything, that there is no necessary connection between what is called religion and morality. Certainly there were millions of moral people, those who loved mercy and dealt honestly, before the Catholic Church existed. The virtues were well known, and practiced, before a triple crown surrounded the cunning brain of an Italian Vicar of God, and before the flames of the *Auto da fé* delighted the hearts of a Christian mob. Thousands of people died for the right, before the wrong organized the infallible church.

But why should any man deem it his duty or feel it a pleasure to say harsh and cruel things of the dead? Why pierce the brow of death with the thorns of hatred? Suppose the editor of the *Watchman* had died, and Judge Normile had been the survivor, would the infidel and scoffer have attacked the unreplying dead?

Henry D'Arcy I did not know; but Judge Normile was my friend and I was his. Although we met but a few times, he excited my admiration and respect. He impressed me as being an exceedingly intelligent man, well informed on many subjects, of varied reading, possessed of a clear and logical mind, a poetic temperament, enjoying the beautiful things

in literature and art, and the noble things in life. He gave his opinions freely, but without the least arrogance, and seemed perfectly willing that others should enjoy the privilege of differing with him. He was, so far as I could perceive, a gentleman, tender of the feelings of others, free and manly in his bearing, "of most excellent fancy," and a most charming and agreeable companion.

According, however, to the *Watchman*, such a man is far below a "devout robber" or a "penitent murderer." Is it possible that an assassin like Ravillac is far better than a philosopher like Voltaire; and that all the Catholic robbers and murderers who retain their faith, give greater delight to God than the Humboldts, Haeckels and Darwins who have filled the world with intellectual light?

Possibly the Catholic Church is mistaken. Possibly the *Watchman* is in error, and possibly there may be for the erring, even in another world, some asylum besides hell.

Judge Normile died by his own hand. Certainly he was not afraid of the future. He was not appalled by death. He died by his own hand. Can anything be more pitiful—more terrible? How can a man in the flowing tide and noon of life destroy himself? What storms there must have been within the

brain; what tempests must have raved and wrecked; what lightnings blinded and revealed; what hurrying clouds obscured and hid the stars; what monstrous shapes emerged from gloom; what darkness fell upon the day; what visions filled the night; how the light failed; how paths were lost; how highways disappeared; how chasms yawned; until one thought—the thought of death—swift, compassionate and endless—became the insane monarch of the mind.

Standing by the prostrate form of one who thus found death, it is far better to pity than to revile—to kiss the clay than curse the man.

The editor of the *Watchman* has done himself injustice. He has not injured the dead, but the living.

I am an infidel—an unbeliever—and yet I hope that all the children of men may find peace and joy. No matter how they leave this world, from altar or from scaffold, crowned with virtue or stained with crime, I hope that good may come to all.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

IS SUICIDE A SIN?

IS SUICIDE A SIN?*

COL. INGERSOLL'S FIRST LETTER.

I DO not know whether self-killing is on the increase or not. If it is, then there must be, on the average, more trouble, more sorrow, more failure, and, consequently, more people are driven to despair. In civilized life there is a great struggle, great competition, and many fail. To fail in a great city is like being wrecked at sea. In the country a man has friends; he can get a little credit, a little help, but in the city it is different. The man is lost in the multitude. In the roar of the streets, his cry is not heard. Death becomes his only friend. Death promises release from want, from hunger and pain, and so the poor wretch lays down his burden, dashes it from his shoulders and falls asleep.

To me all this seems very natural. The wonder is that so many endure and suffer to the natural end, that so many nurse the spark of life in huts and prisons, keep it and guard it through years of misery

*These letters were published in the *New York World*, 1894.

and want; support it by beggary, by eating the crust found in the gutter, and to whom it only gives days of weariness and nights of fear and dread. Why should the man, sitting amid the wreck of all he had, the loved ones dead, friends lost, seek to lengthen, to preserve his life? What can the future have for him?

Under many circumstances a man has the right to kill himself. When life is of no value to him, when he can be of no real assistance to others, why should a man continue? When he is of no benefit, when he is a burden to those he loves, why should he remain? The old idea was that God made us and placed us here for a purpose and that it was our duty to remain until he called us. The world is outgrowing this absurdity. What pleasure can it give God to see a man devoured by a cancer; to see the quivering flesh slowly eaten; to see the nerves throbbing with pain? Is this a festival for God? Why should the poor wretch stay and suffer? A little morphine would give him sleep—the agony would be forgotten and he would pass unconsciously from happy dreams to painless death.

If God determines all births and deaths, of what use is medicine and why should doctors defy with pills and powders, the decrees of God? No one,

except a few insane, act now according to this childish superstition. Why should a man, surrounded by flames, in the midst of a burning building, from which there is no escape, hesitate to put a bullet through his brain or a dagger in his heart? Would it give God pleasure to see him burn? When did the man lose the right of self-defence?

So, when a man has committed some awful crime, why should he stay and ruin his family and friends? Why should he add to the injury? Why should he live, filling his days and nights, and the days and nights of others, with grief and pain, with agony and tears?

Why should a man sentenced to imprisonment for life hesitate to still his heart? The grave is better than the cell. Sleep is sweeter than the ache of toil. The dead have no masters.

So the poor girl, betrayed and deserted, the door of home closed against her, the faces of friends averted, no hand that will help, no eye that will soften with pity, the future an abyss filled with monstrous shapes of dread and fear, her mind racked by fragments of thoughts like clouds broken by storm, pursued, surrounded by the serpents of remorse, flying from horrors too great to bear, rushes with joy through the welcome door of death.

Undoubtedly there are many cases of perfectly justifiable suicide—cases in which not to end life would be a mistake, sometimes almost a crime.

As to the necessity of death, each must decide for himself. And if a man honestly decides that death is best—best for him and others—and acts upon the decision, why should he be blamed?

Certainly the man who kills himself is not a physical coward. He may have lacked moral courage, but not physical. It may be said that some men fight duels because they are afraid to decline. They are between two fires—the chance of death and the certainty of dishonor, and they take the chance of death. So the Christian martyrs were, according to their belief, between two fires—the flames of the fagot that could burn but for a few moments, and the fires of God, that were eternal. And they chose the flames of the fagot.

Men who fear death to that degree that they will bear all the pains and pangs that nerves can feel, rather than die, cannot afford to call the suicide a coward. It does not seem to me that Brutus was a coward or that Seneca was. Surely Antony had nothing left to live for. Cato was not a craven. He acted on his judgment. So with hundreds of others who felt that they had reached the end—that the

journey was done, the voyage was over, and, so feeling, stopped. It seems certain that the man who commits suicide, who "does the thing that ends all other deeds, that shackles accident and bolts up change" is not lacking in physical courage.

If men had the courage, they would not linger in prisons, in almshouses, in hospitals; they would not bear the pangs of incurable disease, the stains of dishonor; they would not live in filth and want, in poverty and hunger, neither would they wear the chain of slavery. All this can be accounted for only by the fear of death or "of something after."

Seneca, knowing that Nero intended to take his life, had no fear. He knew that he could defeat the Emperor. He knew that "at the bottom of every river, in the coil of every rope, on the point of every dagger, Liberty sat and smiled." He knew that it was his own fault if he allowed himself to be tortured to death by his enemy. He said: "There is this blessing, that while life has but one entrance, it has exits innumerable, and as I choose the house in which I live, the ship in which I will sail, so will I choose the time and manner of my death."

To me this is not cowardly, but manly and noble.

Under the Roman law persons found guilty of

certain offences were not only destroyed, but their blood was polluted and their children became outcasts. If, however, they died before conviction their children were saved. Many committed suicide to save their babes. Certainly they were not cowards. Although guilty of great crimes they had enough of honor, of manhood, left to save their innocent children. This was not cowardice.

Without doubt many suicides are caused by insanity. Men lose their property. The fear of the future overpowers them. Things lose proportion, they lose poise and balance, and in a flash, a gleam of frenzy, kill themselves. The disappointed in love, broken in heart—the light fading from their lives—seek the refuge of death.

Those who take their lives in painful, barbarous ways—who mangle their throats with broken glass, dash themselves from towers and roofs, take poisons that torture like the rack—such persons must be insane. But those who take the facts into account, who weigh the arguments for and against, and who decide that death is best—the only good—and then resort to reasonable means, may be, so far as I can see, in full possession of their minds.

Life is not the same to all—to some a blessing, to some a curse, to some not much in any way.

Some leave it with unspeakable regret, some with the keenest joy and some with indifference.

Religion, or the decadence of religion, has a bearing upon the number of suicides. The fear of God, of judgment, of eternal pain will stay the hand, and people so believing will suffer here until relieved by natural death. A belief in eternal agony beyond the grave will cause such believers to suffer the pangs of this life. When there is no fear of the future, when death is believed to be a dreamless sleep, men have less hesitation about ending their lives. On the other hand, orthodox religion has driven millions to insanity. It has caused parents to murder their children and many thousands to destroy themselves and others.

It seems probable that all real, genuine orthodox believers who kill themselves must be insane, and to such a degree that their belief is forgotten. God and hell are out of their minds.

I am satisfied that many who commit suicide are insane, many are in the twilight or dusk of insanity, and many are perfectly sane.

The law we have in this State making it a crime to attempt suicide is cruel and absurd and calculated to increase the number of successful suicides. When a man has suffered so much, when he has been so

persecuted and pursued by disaster that he seeks the rest and sleep of death, why should the State add to the sufferings of that man? A man seeking death, knowing that he will be punished if he fails, will take extra pains and precautions to make death certain.

This law was born of superstition, passed by thoughtlessness and enforced by ignorance and cruelty.

When the house of life becomes a prison, when the horizon has shrunk and narrowed to a cell, and when the convict longs for the liberty of death, why should the effort to escape be regarded as a crime?

Of course, I regard life from a natural point of view. I do not take gods, heavens or hells into account. My horizon is the known, and my estimate of life is based upon what I know of life here in this world. People should not suffer for the sake of supernatural beings or for other worlds or the hopes and fears of some future state. Our joys, our sufferings and our duties are here.

The law of New York about the attempt to commit suicide and the law as to divorce are about equal. Both are idiotic. Law cannot prevent suicide. Those who have lost all fear of death, care nothing for law

and its penalties. Death is liberty, absolute and eternal.

We should remember that nothing happens but the natural. Back of every suicide and every attempt to commit suicide is the natural and efficient cause. Nothing happens by chance. In this world the facts touch each other. There is no space between—no room for chance. Given a certain heart and brain, certain conditions, and suicide is the necessary result. If we wish to prevent suicide we must change conditions. We must by education, by invention, by art, by civilization, add to the value of the average life. We must cultivate the brain and heart—do away with false pride and false modesty. We must become generous enough to help our fellows without degrading them. We must make industry—useful work of all kinds—honorable. We must mingle a little affection with our charity—a little fellowship. We should allow those who have sinned to really reform. We should not think only of what the wicked have done, but we should think of what we have wanted to do. People do not hate the sick. Why should they despise the mentally weak—the diseased in brain?

Our actions are the fruit, the result, of circumstances—of conditions—and we do as we must.

This great truth should fill the heart with pity for the failures of our race.

Sometimes I have wondered that Christians denounced the suicide; that in olden times they buried him where the roads crossed, drove a stake through his body, and then took his property from his children and gave it to the State.

If Christians would only think, they would see that orthodox religion rests upon suicide—that man was redeemed by suicide, and that without suicide the whole world would have been lost.

If Christ were God, then he had the power to protect himself from the Jews without hurting them. But instead of using his power he allowed them to take his life.

If a strong man should allow a few little children to hack him to death with knives when he could easily have brushed them aside, would we not say that he committed suicide?

There is no escape. If Christ were, in fact, God, and allowed the Jews to kill him, then he consented to his own death—refused, though perfectly able, to defend and protect himself, and was, in fact, a suicide.

We cannot reform the world by law or by superstition. As long as there shall be pain and failure,

want and sorrow, agony and crime, men and women will untie life's knot and seek the peace of death.

To the hopelessly imprisoned—to the dishonored and despised—to those who have failed, who have no future, no hope—to the abandoned, the broken-hearted, to those who are only remnants and fragments of men and women—how consoling, how enchanting is the thought of death!

And even to the most fortunate, death at last is a welcome deliverer. Death is as natural and as merciful as life. When we have journeyed long—when we are weary—when we wish for the twilight, for the dusk, for the cool kisses of the night—when the senses are dull—when the pulse is faint and low—when the mists gather on the mirror of memory—when the past is almost forgotten, the present hardly perceived—when the future has but empty hands—death is as welcome as a strain of music.

After all, death is not so terrible as joyless life. Next to eternal happiness is to sleep in the soft clasp of the cool earth, disturbed by no dream, by no thought, by no pain, by no fear, unconscious of all and forever.

The wonder is that so many live, that in spite of rags and want, in spite of tenement and gutter, of filth and pain, they limp and stagger and crawl

beneath their burdens to the natural end. The wonder is that so few of the miserable are brave enough to die—that so many are terrified by the "something after death"—by the spectres and phantoms of superstition.

Most people are in love with life. How they cling to it in the arctic snows—how they struggle in the waves and currents of the sea—how they linger in famine—how they fight disaster and despair! On the crumbling edge of death they keep the flag flying and go down at last full of hope and courage.

But many have not such natures. They cannot bear defeat. They are disheartened by disaster. They lie down on the field of conflict and give the earth their blood.

They are our unfortunate brothers and sisters. We should not curse or blame—we should pity. On their pallid faces our tears should fall.

One of the best men I ever knew, with an affectionate wife, a charming and loving daughter, committed suicide. He was a man of generous impulses. His heart was loving and tender. He was conscientious, and so sensitive that he blamed himself for having done what at the time he thought was wise and best. He was the victim of his virtues. Let us be merciful in our judgments.

All we can say is that the good and the bad, the loving and the malignant, the conscientious and the vicious, the educated and the ignorant, actuated by many motives, urged and pushed by circumstances and conditions—sometimes in the calm of judgment, sometimes in passion's storm and stress, sometimes in whirl and tempest of insanity—raise their hands against themselves and desperately put out the light of life.

Those who attempt suicide should not be punished. If they are insane they should if possible be restored to reason; if sane, they should be reasoned with, calmed and assisted.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

COL. INGERSOLL'S REPLY TO HIS CRITICS.

IN the article written by me about suicide the ground was taken that "under many circumstances a man has the right to kill himself."

This has been attacked with great fury by clergymen, editors and the writers of letters. These people contend that the right of self-destruction does not and cannot exist. They insist that life is the gift of God, and that he only has the right to end the days of men; that it is our duty to bear the sorrows that he sends with grateful patience. Some have denounced suicide as the worst of crimes—worse than the murder of another.

The first question, then, is:

Has a man under any circumstances the right to kill himself?

A man is being slowly devoured by a cancer—his agony is intense—his suffering all that nerves can feel. His life is slowly being taken. Is this the work of the good God? Did the compassionate God

create the cancer so that it might feed on the quivering flesh of this victim?

This man, suffering agonies beyond the imagination to conceive, is of no use to himself. His life is but a succession of pangs. He is of no use to his wife, his children, his friends or society. Day after day he is rendered unconscious by drugs that numb the nerves and put the brain to sleep.

Has he the right to render himself unconscious? Is it proper for him to take refuge in sleep?

If there be a good God I cannot believe that he takes pleasure in the sufferings of men—that he gloats over the agonies of his children. If there be a good God, he will, to the extent of his power, lessen the evils of life.

So I insist that the man being eaten by the cancer—a burden to himself and others, useless in every way—has the right to end his pain and pass through happy sleep to dreamless rest.

But those who have answered me would say to this man: "It is your duty to be devoured. The good God wishes you to suffer. Your life is the gift of God. You hold it in trust and you have no right to end it. The cancer is the creation of God and it is your duty to furnish it with food."

Take another case: A man is on a burning ship,

the crew and the rest of the passengers have escaped—gone in the lifeboats—and he is left alone. In the wide horizon there is no sail, no sign of help. He cannot swim. If he leaps into the sea he drowns, if he remains on the ship he burns. In any event he can live but a few moments.

Those who have answered me, those who insist that under no circumstances a man has the right to take his life, would say to this man on the deck, "Remain where you are. It is the desire of your loving, heavenly Father that you be clothed in flame—that you slowly roast—that your eyes be scorched to blindness and that you die insane with pain. Your life is not your own, only the agony is yours."

I would say to this man: Do as you wish. If you prefer drowning to burning, leap into the sea. Between inevitable evils you have the right of choice. You can help no one, not even God, by allowing yourself to be burned, and you can injure no one, not even God, by choosing the easier death.

Let us suppose another case:

A man has been captured by savages in Central Africa. He is about to be tortured to death. His captors are going to thrust splinters of pine into

his flesh and then set them on fire. He watches them as they make the preparations. He knows what they are about to do and what he is about to suffer. There is no hope of rescue, of help. He has a vial of poison. He knows that he can take it and in one moment pass beyond their power, leaving to them only the dead body.

Is this man under obligation to keep his life because God gave it, until the savages by torture take it? Are the savages the agents of the good God? Are they the servants of the Infinite? Is it the duty of this man to allow them to wrap his body in a garment of flame? Has he no right to defend himself? Is it the will of God that he die by torture? What would any man of ordinary intelligence do in a case like this? Is there room for discussion?

If the man took the poison, shortened his life a few moments, escaped the tortures of the savages, is it possible that he would in another world be tortured forever by an infinite savage?

Suppose another case: In the good old days, when the Inquisition flourished, when men loved their enemies and murdered their friends, many frightful and ingenious ways were devised to touch the nerves of pain.

Those who loved God, who had been "born twice," would take a fellow-man who had been convicted of "heresy," lay him upon the floor of a dungeon, secure his arms and legs with chains, fasten him to the earth so that he could not move, put an iron vessel, the opening downward, on his stomach, place in the vessel several rats, then tie it securely to his body. Then these worshipers of God would wait until the rats, seeking food and liberty, would gnaw through the body of the victim.

Now, if a man about to be subjected to this torture, had within his hand a dagger, would it excite the wrath of the "good God," if with one quick stroke he found the protection of death?

To this question there can be but one answer.

In the cases I have supposed it seems to me that each person would have the right to destroy himself. It does not seem possible that the man was under obligation to be devoured by a cancer; to remain upon the ship and perish in flame; to throw away the poison and be tortured to death by savages; to drop the dagger and endure the "mercies" of the church.

If, in the cases I have supposed, men would have the right to take their lives, then I was right when

I said that "under many circumstances a man has a right to kill himself."

Second.—I denied that persons who killed themselves were physical cowards. They may lack moral courage; they may exaggerate their misfortunes, lose the sense of proportion, but the man who plunges the dagger in his heart, who sends the bullet through his brain, who leaps from some roof and dashes himself against the stones beneath, is not and cannot be a physical coward.

The basis of cowardice is the fear of injury or the fear of death, and when that fear is not only gone, but in its place is the desire to die, no matter by what means, it is impossible that cowardice should exist. The suicide wants the very thing that a coward fears. He seeks the very thing that cowardice endeavors to escape.

So, the man, forced to a choice of evils, choosing the less is not a coward, but a reasonable man.

It must be admitted that the suicide is honest with himself. He is to bear the injury; if it be one. Certainly there is no hypocrisy, and just as certainly there is no physical cowardice.

Is the man who takes morphine rather than be eaten to death by a cancer a coward?

Is the man who leaps into the sea rather than be

burned a coward? Is the man that takes poison rather than be tortured to death by savages or "Christians" a coward?

Third.—I also took the position that some suicides were sane; that they acted on their best judgment, and that they were in full possession of their minds. Now, if under some circumstances, a man has the right to take his life, and, if, under such circumstances, he does take his life, then it cannot be said that he was insane.

Most of the persons who have tried to answer me have taken the ground that suicide is not only a crime, but some of them have said that it is the greatest of crimes. Now, if it be a crime, then the suicide must have been sane. So all persons who denounce the suicide as a criminal admit that he was sane. Under the law, an insane person is incapable of committing a crime. All the clergymen who have answered me, and who have passionately asserted that suicide is a crime, have by that assertion admitted that those who killed themselves were sane.

They agree with me, and not only admit, but assert that "some who have committed suicide were sane and in the full possession of their minds."

It seems to me that these three propositions have

been demonstrated to be true: *First*, that under some circumstances a man has the right to take his life; *second*, that the man who commits suicide is not a physical coward, and, *third*, that some who have committed suicide were at the time sane and in full possession of their minds.

Fourth.—I insisted, and still insist, that suicide was and is the foundation of the Christian religion.

I still insist that if Christ were God he had the power to protect himself without injuring his assailants—that having that power it was his duty to use it, and that failing to use it he consented to his own death and was guilty of suicide.

To this the clergy answer that it was self-sacrifice for the redemption of man, that he made an atonement for the sins of believers. These ideas about redemption and atonement are born of a belief in the "fall of man," on account of the sins of our first "parents," and of the declaration that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." The foundation has crumbled. No intelligent person now believes in the "fall of man"—that our first parents were perfect, and that their descendants grew worse and worse, at least until the coming of Christ.

Intelligent men now believe that ages and ages

before the dawn of history, man was a poor, naked, cruel, ignorant and degraded savage, whose language consisted of a few sounds of terror, of hatred and delight; that he devoured his fellow-man, having all the vices, but not all the virtues of the beasts; that the journey from the den to the home, the palace, has been long and painful, through many centuries of suffering, of cruelty and war; through many ages of discovery, invention, self-sacrifice and thought.

Redemption and atonement are left without a fact on which to rest. The idea that an infinite God, creator of all worlds, came to this grain of sand, learned the trade of a carpenter, discussed with Pharisees and scribes, and allowed a few infuriated Hebrews to put him to death that he might atone for the sins of men and redeem a few believers from the consequences of his own wrath, can find no lodgment in a good and natural brain.

In no mythology can anything more monstrously unbelievable be found.

But if Christ were a man and attacked the religion of his times because it was cruel and absurd; if he endeavored to found a religion of kindness, of good deeds, to take the place of heartlessness and ceremony, and if, rather than to deny what he be-

lieved to be right and true, he suffered death, then he was a noble man—a benefactor of his race. But if he were God there was no need of this. The Jews did not wish to kill God. If he had only made himself known all knees would have touched the ground. If he were God it required no heroism to die. He knew that what we call death is but the opening of the gates of eternal life. If he were God there was no self-sacrifice. He had no need to suffer pain. He could have changed the crucifixion to a joy.

Even the editors of religious weeklies see that there is no escape from these conclusions—from these arguments—and so, instead of attacking the arguments, they attack the man who makes them.

Fifth.—I denounced the law of New York that makes an attempt to commit suicide a crime.

It seems to me that one who has suffered so much that he passionately longs for death should be pitied, instead of punished—helped rather than imprisoned.

A despairing woman who had vainly sought for leave to toil, a woman without home, without friends, without bread, with clasped hands, with tear-filled eyes, with broken words of prayer, in the darkness of night leaps from the dock, hoping,

longing for the tearless sleep of death. She is rescued by a kind, courageous man, handed over to the authorities, indicted, tried, convicted, clothed in a convict's garb and locked in a felon's cell.

To me this law seems barbarous and absurd, a law that only savages would enforce.

Sixth.—In this discussion a curious thing has happened. For several centuries the clergy have declared that while infidelity is a very good thing to live by, it is a bad support, a wretched consolation, in the hour of death. They have in spite of the truth, declared that all the great unbelievers died trembling with fear, asking God for mercy, surrounded by fiends, in the torments of despair. Think of the thousands and thousands of clergymen who have described the last agonies of Voltaire, who died as peacefully as a happy child smilingly passes from play to slumber; the final anguish of Hume, who fell into his last sleep as serenely as a river, running between green and shaded banks, reaches the sea; the despair of Thomas Paine, one of the bravest, one of the noblest men, who met the night of death untroubled as a star that meets the morning.

At the same time these ministers admitted that the average murderer could meet death on the

scaffold with perfect serenity, and could smilingly ask the people who had gathered to see him killed to meet him in heaven.

But the honest man who had expressed his honest thoughts against the creed of the church in power could not die in peace. God would see to it that his last moments should be filled with the insanity of fear—that with his last breath he should utter the shriek of remorse, the cry for pardon.

This has all changed, and now the clergy, in their sermons answering me, declare that the atheists, the freethinkers, have no fear of death—that to avoid some little annoyance, a passing inconvenience, they gladly and cheerfully put out the light of life. It is now said that infidels believe that death is the end—that it is a dreamless sleep—that it is without pain—that therefore they have no fear, care nothing for gods, or heavens or hells, nothing for the threats of the pulpit, nothing for the day of judgment, and that when life becomes a burden they carelessly throw it down.

The infidels are so afraid of death that they commit suicide.

This certainly is a great change, and I congratulate myself on having forced the clergy to contradict themselves.

Seventh.—The clergy take the position that the atheist, the unbeliever, has no standard of morality —that he can have no real conception of right and wrong. They are of the opinion that it is impossible for one to be moral or good unless he believes in some Being far above himself.

In this connection we might ask how God can be moral or good unless he believes in some Being superior to himself?

What is morality? It is the best thing to do under the circumstances. What is the best thing to do under the circumstances? That which will increase the sum of human happiness—or lessen it the least. Happiness in its highest, noblest form, is the only good; that which increases or preserves or creates happiness is moral—that which decreases it, or puts it in peril, is immoral.

It is not hard for an atheist—for an unbeliever—to keep his hands out of the fire. He knows that burning his hands will not increase his well-being, and he is moral enough to keep them out of the flames.

So it may be said that each man acts according to his intelligence—so far as what he considers his own good is concerned. Sometimes he is swayed by passion, by prejudice, by ignorance—but when

he is really intelligent, master of himself, he does what he believes is best for him. If he is intelligent enough he knows that what is really good for him is good for others—for all the world.

It is impossible for me to see why any belief in the supernatural is necessary to have a keen perception of right and wrong. Every man who has the capacity to suffer and enjoy, and has imagination enough to give the same capacity to others, has within himself the natural basis of all morality. The idea of morality was born here, in this world, of the experience, the intelligence of mankind. Morality is not of supernatural origin. It did not fall from the clouds, and it needs no belief in the supernatural, no supernatural promises or threats, no supernatural heavens or hells to give it force and life. Subjects who are governed by the threats and promises of a king are merely slaves. They are not governed by the ideal, by noble views of right and wrong. They are obedient cowards, controlled by fear, or beggars governed by rewards—by alms.

Right and wrong exist in the nature of things. Murder was just as criminal before as after the promulgation of the Ten Commandments.

Eighth.—Many of the clergy, some editors and some writers of letters who have answered me, have

said that suicide is the worst of crimes—that a man had better murder somebody else than himself. One clergyman gives as a reason for this statement that the suicide dies in an act of sin, and therefore he had better kill another person. Probably he would commit a less crime if he would murder his wife or mother.

I do not see that it is any worse to die than to live in sin. To say that it is not as wicked to murder another as yourself seems absurd. The man about to kill himself wishes to die. Why is it better for him to kill another man, who wishes to live?

To my mind it seems clear that you had better injure yourself than another. Better be a spendthrift than a thief. Better throw away your own money than steal the money of another—better kill yourself if you wish to die than murder one whose life is full of joy.

The clergy tell us that God is everywhere, and that it is one of the greatest possible crimes to rush into his presence. It is wonderful how much they know about God and how little about their fellowmen. Wonderful the amount of their information about other worlds and how limited their knowledge is of this.

There may or may not be an infinite Being. I

neither affirm nor deny. I am honest enough to say that I do not know. I am candid enough to admit that the question is beyond the limitations of my mind. Yet I think I know as much on that subject as any human being knows or ever knew, and that is—nothing. I do not say that there is not another world, another life; neither do I say that there is. I say that I do not know. It seems to me that every sane and honest man must say the same. But if there is an infinitely good God and another world, then the infinitely good God will be just as good to us in that world as he is in this. If this infinitely good God loves his children in this world, he will love them in another. If he loves a man when he is alive, he will not hate him the instant he is dead.

If we are the children of an infinitely wise and powerful God, he knew exactly what we would do —the temptations that we could and could not withstand—knew exactly the effect that everything would have upon us, knew under what circumstances we would take our lives—and produced such circumstances himself. It is perfectly apparent that there are many people incapable by nature of bearing the burdens of life, incapable of preserving their mental poise in stress and

strain of disaster, disease and loss, and who by failure, by misfortune and want, are driven to despair and insanity, in whose darkened minds there comes like a flash of lightning in the night, the thought of death, a thought so strong, so vivid, that all fear is lost, all ties broken, all duties, all obligations, all hopes forgotten, and naught remains except a fierce and wild desire to die. Thousands and thousands become moody, melancholy, brood upon loss of money, of position, of friends, until reason abdicates and frenzy takes possession of the soul. If there be an infinitely wise and powerful God, all this was known to him from the beginning, and he so created things, established relations, put in operation causes and effects, that all that has happened was the necessary result of his own acts.

Ninth.—Nearly all who have tried to answer what I said have been exceedingly careful to misquote me, and then answer something that I never uttered. They have declared that I have advised people who were in trouble, somewhat annoyed, to kill themselves; that I have told men who have lost their money, who had failed in business, who were not good in health, to kill themselves at once, without taking into consideration any duty that they owed to wives, children, friends, or society.

No man has a right to leave his wife to fight the battle alone if he is able to help. No man has a right to desert his children if he can possibly be of use. As long as he can add to the comfort of those he loves, as long as he can stand between wife and misery, between child and want, as long as he can be of any use, it is his duty to remain.

I believe in the cheerful view, in looking at the sunny side of things, in bearing with fortitude the evils of life, in struggling against adversity, in finding the fuel of laughter even in disaster, in having confidence in to-morrow, in finding the pearl of joy among the flints and shards, and in changing by the alchemy of patience even evil things to good. I believe in the gospel of cheerfulness, of courage and good nature.

Of the future I have no fear. My fate is the fate of the world—of all that live. My anxieties are about this life, this world. About the phantoms called gods and their impossible hells, I have no care, no fear.

The existence of God I neither affirm nor deny, I wait. The immortality of the soul I neither affirm nor deny. I hope—hope for all of the children of men. I have never denied the existence of another world, nor the immortality of the soul. For many

years I have said that the idea of immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death.

What I deny is the immortality of pain, the eternity of torture.

After all, the instinct of self-preservation is strong. People do not kill themselves on the advice of friends or enemies. All wish to be happy, to enjoy life; all wish for food and roof and raiment, for friends, and as long as life gives joy, the idea of self-destruction never enters the human mind.

The oppressors, the tyrants, those who trample on the rights of others, the robbers of the poor, those who put wages below the living point, the ministers who make people insane by preaching the dogma of eternal pain; these are the men who drive the weak, the suffering and the helpless down to death.

It will not do to say that God has appointed a time for each to die. Of this there is, and there

can be, no evidence. There is no evidence that any god takes any interest in the affairs of men —that any sides with the right or helps the weak, protects the innocent or rescues the oppressed. Even the clergy admit that their God, through all ages, has allowed his friends, his worshipers, to be imprisoned, tortured and murdered by his enemies. Such is the protection of God. Billions of prayers have been uttered; has one been answered? Who sends plague, pestilence and famine? Who bids the earthquake devour and the volcano to overwhelm?

Tenth.—Again, I say that it is wonderful to me that so many men, so many women endure and carry their burdens to the natural end; that so many, in spite of "age, ache and penury," guard with trembling hands the spark of life; that prisoners for life toil and suffer to the last; that the helpless wretches in poorhouses and asylums cling to life; that the exiles in Siberia, loaded with chains, scarred with the knout, live on; that the incurables, whose every breath is a pang, and for whom the future has only pain, should fear the merciful touch and clasp of death.

It is but a few steps at most from the cradle to the grave; a short journey. The suicide hastens,

shortens the path, loses the afternoon, the twilight, the dusk of life's day; loses what he does not want, what he cannot bear. In the tempest of despair, in the blind fury of madness, or in the calm of thought and choice, the beleaguered soul finds the serenity of death.

Let us leave the dead where nature leaves them. We know nothing of any realm that lies beyond the horizon of the known, beyond the end of life. Let us be honest with ourselves and others. Let us pity the suffering, the despairing, the men and women hunted and pursued by grief and shame, by misery and want, by chance and fate until their only friend is death.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

INTERVIEWS ON SUICIDE.

SUICIDE A SIN.*

Question. Do you think that what you have written about suicide has caused people to take their lives?

Answer. No, I do not. People do not kill themselves because of the ideas of others. They are the victims of misfortune.

Question. What do you consider the chief cause of suicide?

Answer. There are many causes. Some individuals are crossed in love, others are bankrupt in estate or reputation, still others are diseased in body and frequently in mind. There are a thousand and one causes that lead up to the final act.

Question. Do you consider that nationality plays a part in these tragedies?

Answer. No, it is a question of individuals. There are those whose sorrows are greater than they can bear. These sufferers seek the peace of death.

Question. Do you, then, advise suicide?

* *New York Journal*, 1895. An Interview.

Answer. No, I have never done so, but I have said, and still say, that there are circumstances under which it is justifiable for a person to take his life.

Question. What do you think of the law which prohibits self-destruction?

Answer. That it is absurd and ridiculous. The other day a man was tried before Judge Goff for having tried to kill himself. I think he pleaded guilty, and the Judge, after speaking of the terrible crime of the poor wretch, sentenced him to the penitentiary for two years. This was an outrage; infamous in every way, and a disgrace to our civilization.

Question. Do you believe that such a law will prevent the frequency of suicides?

Answer. By no means. After this, persons in New York who have made up their minds to commit suicide will see to it that they succeed.

Question. Have your opinions been in any way modified since your first announcement of them?

Answer. No, I feel now as I have felt for many years. No one can answer my articles on suicide, because no one can satisfactorily refute them. Every man of sense knows that a person being devoured by a cancer has the right to take morphine,

and pass from agony to dreamless sleep. So, too, there are circumstances under which a man has the right to end his pain of mind.

Question. Have you seen in the papers that many who have killed themselves have had on their persons some article of yours on suicide?

Answer. Yes, I have read such accounts, but I repeat that I do not think these persons were led to kill themselves by reading the articles. Many people who have killed themselves were found to have Bibles or tracts in their pockets.

Question. How do you account for the presence of the latter?

Answer. The reason of this is that the theologians know nothing. The pious imagine that their God has placed us here for some wise and inscrutable purpose, and that he will call for us when he wants us. All this is idiotic. When a man is of no use to himself or to others, when his days and nights are filled with pain and sorrow, why should he remain to endure them longer?

SUICIDE A SIN.*

COL. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL was seen at his house and asked if he had read the Rev. Merle St. Croix Wright's sermon.

Answer. Yes. I have read the sermon, and also an interview had with the reverend gentleman.

Long ago I gave my views about suicide, and I entertain the same views still. Mr. Wright's sermon has stirred up quite a commotion among the orthodox ministers. This commotion may always be expected when anything sensible comes from a pulpit. Mr. Wright has mixed a little common sense with his theology, and, of course this has displeased the truly orthodox.

Sense is the bitterest foe that theology has. No system of supernatural religion can outlive a good dose of real good sense. The orthodox ministers take the ground that an infinite Being created man, put him on the earth and determined his days. They say that God desires every person to live until he, God, calls for his soul. They insist that we are

* *New York Herald*, 1887. An Interview.

all on guard and must remain so until relieved by a higher power—the superior officer.

The trouble with this doctrine is that it proves too much. It proves that God kills every person who dies as we say, "according to nature." It proves that we ought to say, "according to God." It proves that God sends the earthquake, the cyclone, the pestilence, for the purpose of killing people. It proves that all diseases and all accidents are his messengers, and that all who do not kill themselves, die by the act, and in accordance with the will of God. It also shows that when a man is murdered, it is in harmony with, and a part of the divine plan. When God created the man who was murdered, he knew that he would be murdered, and when he made the man who committed the murder, he knew exactly what he would do. So that the murder was the act of God.

Can it be said that God intended that thousands should die of famine and that he, to accomplish his purpose, withheld the rain? Can we say that he intended that thousands of innocent men should die in dungeons and on scaffolds?

Is it possible that a man, "slowly being devoured by a cancer," whose days and nights are filled with torture, who is useless to himself and a burden to

others, is carrying out the will of God? Does God enjoy his agony? Is God thrilled by the music of his moans—the melody of his shrieks?

This frightful doctrine makes God an infinite monster, and every human being a slave; a victim. This doctrine is not only infamous but it is idiotic. It makes God the only criminal in the universe.

Now, if we are governed by reason, if we use our senses and our minds, and have courage enough to be honest; if we know a little of the world's history, then we know—if we know anything—that man has taken his chances, precisely the same as other animals. He has been destroyed by heat and cold, by flood and fire, by storm and famine, by countless diseases, by numberless accidents. By his intelligence, his cunning, his strength, his foresight, he has managed to escape utter destruction. He has defended himself. He has received no supernatural aid. Neither has he been attacked by any supernatural power. Nothing has ever happened in nature as the result of a purpose to benefit or injure the human race.

Consequently the question of the right or wrong of suicide is not in any way affected by a supposed obligation to the Infinite.

All theological considerations must be thrown aside

because we see and know that the laws of life are the same for all living things—that when the conditions are favorable, the living multiply and life lengthens, and when the conditions are unfavorable, the living decrease and life shortens. We have no evidence of any interference of any power superior to nature. Taking into consideration the fact that all the duties and obligations of man must be to his fellows, to sentient beings, here in this world, and that he owes no duty and is under no obligation to any phantoms of the air, then it is easy to determine whether a man under certain circumstances has the right to end his life.

If he can be of no use to others—if he is of no use to himself—if he is a burden to others—a curse to himself—why should he remain? By ending his life he ends his sufferings and adds to the well-being of others. He lessens misery and increases happiness. Under such circumstances undoubtedly a man has the right to stop the pulse of pain and woo the sleep that has no dream.

I do not think that the discussion of this question is of much importance, but I am glad that a clergyman has taken a natural and a sensible position, and that he has reasoned not like a minister, but like a man.

When wisdom comes from the pulpit I am de-

lighted and surprised. I feel then that there is a little light in the East, possibly the dawn of a better day.

I congratulate the Rev. Mr. Wright, and thank him for his brave and philosophic words.

There is still another thing. Certainly a man has the right to avoid death, to save himself from accident and disease. If he has this right, then the theologians must admit that God, in making his decrees, took into consideration the result of such actions. Now, if God knew that while most men would avoid death, some would seek it, and if his decrees were so made that they would harmonize with the acts of those who would avoid death, can we say that he did not, in making his decrees, take into consideration the acts of those who would seek death? Let us remember that all actions, good, bad and indifferent, are the necessary children of conditions—that there is no chance in the natural world in which we live.

So, we must keep in mind that all real opinions are honest, and that all have the same right to express their thoughts. Let us be charitable.

When some suffering wretch, wild with pain, crazed with regret, frenzied with fear, with desperate hand unties the knot of life, let us have pity—Let us be generous.

SUICIDE AND SANITY.*

Question. Is a suicide necessarily insane? was the first question, to which Colonel Ingersoll replied:

Answer. No. At the same time I believe that a great majority of suicides are insane. There are circumstances under which suicide is natural, sensible and right. When a man is of no use to himself, when he can be of no use to others, when his life is filled with agony, when the future has no promise of relief, then I think he has the right to cast the burden of life away and seek the repose of death.

Question. Is a suicide necessarily a coward?

Answer. I cannot conceive of cowardice in connection with suicide. Of nearly all things death is the most feared. And the man who voluntarily enters the realm of death cannot properly be called a coward. Many men who kill themselves forget

* *New York Press*, 1897. An Interview.

the duties they owe to others—forget their wives and children. Such men are heartless, wicked, brutal; but they are not cowards.

Question. When is the suicide of the sane justifiable?

Answer. To escape death by torture; to avoid being devoured by a cancer; to prevent being a burden on those you love; when you can be of no use to others or to yourself; when life is unbearable; when in all the horizon of the future there is no star of hope.

Question. Do you believe that any suicides have been caused or encouraged by your declaration three years ago that suicide sometimes was justifiable?

Answer. Many preachers talk as though I had inaugurated, invented, suicide, as though no one who had not read my ideas on suicide had ever taken his own life. Talk as long as language lasts, you cannot induce a man to kill himself. The man who takes his own life does not go to others to find reasons or excuses.

Question. On the whole is the world made better or worse by suicides?

Answer. Better by some and poorer by others.

Question. Why is it that Germany, said to be

the most educated of civilized nations, leads the world in suicides?

Answer. I do not know that Germany is the most educated; neither do I know that suicide is more frequent there than in all other countries. I know that the struggle for life is severe in Germany, that the laws are unjust, that the government is oppressive, that the people are sentimental, that they brood over their troubles and easily become hopeless.

Question. If suicide is sometimes justifiable, is not killing of born idiots and infants hopelessly handicapped at birth equally so?

Answer. There is no relation between the questions—between suicides and killing idiots. Suicide may, under certain circumstances, be right and killing idiots may be wrong; killing idiots may be right and suicide may be wrong. When we look about us, when we read interviews with preachers about Jonah, we know that all the idiots have not been killed.

Question. Should suicide be forbidden by law?

Answer. No. A law that provides for the punishment of those who attempt to commit suicide is idiotic. Those who are willing to meet death are not afraid of law. The only effect of such a law

would be to make the person who had concluded to kill himself a little more careful to succeed.

Question. What is your belief about virtue, morality and religion?

Answer. I believe that all actions that tend to the well-being of sentient beings are virtuous and moral. I believe that real religion consists in doing good. I do not believe in phantoms. I believe in the uniformity of nature; that matter will forever attract matter in proportion to mass and distance; that, under the same circumstances, falling bodies will attain the same speed, increasing in exact proportion to distance; that light will always, under the same circumstances, be reflected at the same angle; that it will always travel with the same velocity; that air will forever be lighter than water, and gold heavier than iron; that all substances will be true to their natures; that a certain degree of heat will always expand the metals and change water into steam; that a certain degree of cold will cause the metals to shrink and change water into ice; that all atoms will forever be in motion; that like causes will forever produce like effects, that force will be overcome only by force; that no atom of matter will ever be created or destroyed; that the energy in the universe will forever remain the same, noth-

ing lost, nothing gained; that all that has been possible has happened, and that all that will be possible will happen; that the seeds and causes of all thoughts, dreams, fancies and actions, of all virtues and all vices, of all successes and all failures, are in nature; that there is in the universe no power superior to nature; that man is under no obligation to the imaginary gods; that all his obligations and duties are to be discharged and done in this world; that right and wrong do not depend on the will of an infinite Being, but on the consequences of actions, and that these consequences necessarily flow from the nature of things. I believe that the universe is natural.

IS AVARICE TRIUMPHANT?

IS AVARICE TRIUMPHANT?*

THERE are many people, in all countries, who seem to enjoy individual and national decay. They love to prophesy the triumph of evil. They mistake the afternoon of their own lives for the evening of the world. To them everything has changed. Men are no longer honest or brave, and women have ceased to be beautiful. They are dyspeptic, and it gives them the greatest pleasure to say that the art of cooking has been lost.

For many generations many of these people occupied the pulpits. They lifted the hand of warning whenever the human race took a step in advance. As wealth increased, they declared that honesty and goodness and self-denial and charity were vanishing from the earth. They doubted the morality of well-dressed people—considered it impossible that the prosperous should be pious. Like owls sitting on the limbs of a dead tree, they hooted the obsequies of spring, believing it would come no more.

*A reply to General Rush Hawkins' article, "Brutality and Avarice Triumphant," published in the *North American Review*, June, 1891. (497)

There are some patriots who think it their duty to malign and slander the land of their birth. They feel that they have a kind of Cassandra mission, and they really seem to enjoy their work. They honestly believe that every kind of crime is on the increase, that the courts are all corrupt, that the legislators are bribed, that the witnesses are suborned, that all holders of office are dishonest; and they feel like a modern Marius sitting amid the ruins of all the virtues.

It is useless to endeavor to persuade these people that they are wrong. They do not want arguments, because they will not heed them. They need medicine. Their case is not for a philosopher, but for a physician.

General Hawkins is probably right when he says that some fraudulent shoes, some useless muskets, and some worn-out vessels were sold to the Government during the war; but we must remember that there were millions and millions of as good shoes as art and honesty could make, millions of the best muskets ever constructed, and hundreds of the most magnificent ships ever built, sold to the Government during the same period. We must not mistake an eddy for the main stream. We must also remember another thing: there were millions of good, brave,

and patriotic men to wear the shoes, to use the muskets, and to man the ships.

So it is probably true that Congress was extravagant in land subsidies voted to railroads; but that this legislation was secured by bribery is preposterous. It was all done in the light of noon. There is not the slightest evidence tending to show that the general policy of hastening the construction of railways through the Territories of the United States was corruptly adopted—not the slightest. At the same time, it may be that some members of Congress were induced by personal considerations to vote for such subsidies. As a matter of fact, the policy was wise, and through the granting of the subsidies thousands of miles of railways were built, and these railways have given to civilization vast territories which otherwise would have remained substantially useless to the world. Where at that time was a wilderness, now are some of the most thriving cities in the United States—a great, an industrious, and a happy population. The results have justified the action of Congress.

It is also true that some railroads have been "wrecked" in the United States, but most of these wrecks have been the result of competition. It is the same with corporations as with individuals—the

powerful combine against the weak. In the world of commerce and business is the great law of the survival of the strongest. Railroads are not eleemosynary institutions. They have but little regard for the rights of one another. Some fortunes have been made by the criminal "wrecking" of roads, but even in the business of corporations honesty is the best policy, and the companies that have acted in accordance with the highest standard, other things being equal, have reaped the richest harvest.

Many railways were built in advance of a demand; they had to develop the country through which they passed. While they waited for immigration, interest accumulated; as a result foreclosure took place; then reorganization. By that time the country had been populated; towns were springing up along the line; increased business was the result. On the new bonds and the new stock the company paid interest and dividends. Then the ones who first invested and lost their money felt that they had been defrauded.

So it is easy to say that certain men are guilty of crimes—easy to indict the entire nation, and at the same time impossible to substantiate one of the charges. Everyone who knows the history of the Star-Route trials knows that nothing was established

against the defendants, knows that every effort was made by the Government to convict them, and also knows that an unprejudiced jury of twelve men, never suspected of being improperly influenced, after having heard the entire case, pronounced the defendants not guilty. After this, of course, any one can say, who knows nothing of the evidence and who cares nothing for the facts, that the defendants were all guilty.

It may also be true that some settlers in the far West have taken timber from the public lands, and it may be that it was a necessity. Our laws and regulations were such that where a settler was entitled to take up a certain amount of land he had to take it all in one place; he could not take a certain number of acres on the plains and a certain number of acres in the timber. The consequence was that when he settled upon the land—the land that he could cultivate—he took the timber that he needed from the Government land, and this has been called stealing. So I suppose it may be said that the cattle stole the Government's grass and possibly drank the Government's water.

It will also be admitted with pleasure that stock has been "watered" in this country. And what is the crime or practice known as watering stock?

For instance, you have a railroad one hundred miles long, worth, we will say, $3,000,000—able to pay interest on that sum at the rate of six per cent. Now, we all know that the amount of stock issued has nothing to do with the value of the thing represented by the stock. If there was one share of stock representing this railroad, it would be worth three million dollars, whether it said on its face it was one dollar or one hundred dollars. If there were three million shares of stock issued on this property, they would be worth one dollar apiece, and, no matter whether it said on this stock that each share was a hundred dollars or a thousand dollars, the share would be worth one dollar—no more, no less. If any one wishes to find the value of stock, he should find the value of the thing represented by the stock. It is perfectly clear that, if a pie is worth one dollar, and you cut it into four pieces, each piece is worth twenty-five cents; and if you cut it in a thousand pieces, you do not increase the value of the pie.

If, then, you wish to find the value of a share of stock, find its relation to the thing represented by all the stock.

It can also be safely admitted that trusts have been formed. The reason is perfectly clear. Corpora-

tions are like individuals—they combine. Unfortunate corporations become socialistic, anarchistic, and cry out against the abuses of trusts. It is natural for corporations to defend themselves—natural for them to stop ruinous competition by a profitable pool; and when strong corporations combine, little corporations suffer. It is with corporations as with fishes—the large eat the little; and it may be that this will prove a public benefit in the end. When the large corporations have taken possession of the little ones, it may be that the Government will take possession of them—the Government being the largest corporation of them all.

It is to be regretted that all houses are not fireproof; but certainly no one imagines that the people of this country build houses for the purpose of having them burned, or that they erect hotels having in view the broiling of guests. Men act as they must; that is to say, according to wants and necessities. In a new country the buildings are cheaper than in an old one, money is scarcer, interest higher, and consequently people build cheaply and take the risks of fire. They do not do this on account of the Constitution of the United States, or the action of political parties, or the general idea that man is entitled to be free. In the hotels of

tinction between offences and virtues, to regard the little as the important—that is to say, to invert the pyramid.

It is true that the Indians have been badly treated. It is true that the fringe of civilization has been composed of many low and cruel men. It is true that the red man has been demoralized by the vices of the white. It is a frightful fact that, when a superior race meets an inferior, the inferior imitates only the vices of the superior, and the superior those of the inferior. They exchange faults and failings. This is one of the most terrible facts in the history of the human race.

Nothing can be said to justify our treatment of the Indians. There is, however, this shadow of an excuse: In the old times, when we lived along the Atlantic, it hardly occurred to our ancestors that they could ever go beyond the Ohio; so the first treaty with the Indians drove them back but a few miles. In a little while, through immigration, the white race passed the line, and another treaty was made, forcing the Indians still further west; yet the tide of immigration kept on, and in a little while again the line was passed, the treaty violated. Another treaty was made, pushing the Indians still farther toward the Pacific, across the Illinois, across

the Mississippi, across the Missouri, violating at every step some treaty made; and each treaty born of the incapacity of the white men who made it to foretell the growth of the Republic.

But the author of "Brutality and Avarice Triumphant" made a great mistake when he selected the last thirty years of our national life as the period within which the Americans have made a change of the national motto appropriate, and asserted that now there should be in place of the old motto the words, "Plundering Made Easy."

Most men believe in a sensible and manly patriotism. No one should be blind to the defects in the laws and institutions of his country. He should call attention to abuses, not for the purpose of bringing his country into disrepute, but that the abuses may cease and the defects be corrected. He should do what he can to make his country great, prosperous, just, and free. But it is hardly fair to exaggerate the faults of your country for the purpose of calling attention to your own virtues, or to earn the praise of a nation that hates your own. This is what might be called wallowing in the gutter of reform.

The thirty years chosen as the time in which we as a nation have passed from virtue to the lowest depths of brutality and avarice are, in fact, the most

glorious years in the life of this or of any other nation.

In 1861 slavery was, in a legal sense at least, a national institution. It was firmly imbedded in the Federal Constitution. The Fugitive Slave Law was in full force and effect. In all the Southern and in nearly all of the Northern States it was a crime to give food, shelter, or raiment to a man or woman seeking liberty by flight. Humanity was illegal, hospitality a misdemeanor, and charity a crime. Men and women were sold like beasts. Mothers were robbed of their babes while they stood under our flag. All the sacred relations of life were trampled beneath the bloody feet of brutality and avarice. Besides, so firmly was slavery fixed in law and creed, in statute and Scripture, that the tongues of honest men were imprisoned. Those who spoke for the slave were mobbed by Northern lovers of the "Union."

Now, it seems to me that those were the days when the motto could properly have been, "Plundering Made Easy." Those were the days of brutality, and the brutality was practiced to the end that we might make money out of the unpaid labor of others.

It is not necessary to go into details as to the cause

of the then condition; it is enough to say that the whole nation, North and South, was responsible. There were many years of compromise, and thousands of statesmen, so-called, through conventions and platforms, did what they could to preserve slavery and keep the Union. These efforts corrupted politics, demoralized our statesmen, polluted our courts, and poisoned our literature. The Websters, Bentons, and Clays mistook temporary expedients for principles, and really thought that the progress of the world could be stopped by the resolutions of a packed political convention. Yet these men, mistaken as they really were, worked and wrought unconsciously in the cause of human freedom. They believed that the preservation of the Union was the one important thing, and that it could not be preserved unless slavery was protected—unless the North would be faithful to the bargain as written in the Constitution. For the purpose of keeping the nation true to the Union and false to itself, these men exerted every faculty and all their strength. They exhausted their genius in showing that slavery was not, after all, very bad, and that disunion was the most terrible calamity that could by any possibility befall the nation, and that the Union, even at the price of slavery, was the greatest possible blessing. They did not

suspect that slavery would finally strike the blow for disunion. But when the time came and the South unsheathed the sword, the teachings of these men as to the infinite value of the Union gave to our flag millions of brave defenders.

Now, let us see what has been accomplished during the thirty years of "Brutality and Avarice."

The Republic has been rebuilt and reunited, and we shall remain one people for many centuries to come. The Mississippi is nature's protest against disunion. The Constitution of the United States is now the charter of human freedom, and all laws inconsistent with the idea that all men are entitled to liberty have been repealed. The black man knows that the Constitution is his shield, that the laws protect him, that our flag is his, and the black mother feels that her babe belongs to her. Where the slave-pen used to be you will find the schoolhouse. The dealer in human flesh is now a teacher; instead of lacerating the back of a child, he develops and illumines the mind of a pupil.

There is now freedom of speech. Men are allowed to utter their thoughts. Lips are no longer sealed by mobs. Never before in the history of our world has so much been done for education.

The amount of business done in a country on credit is the measure of confidence, and confidence is based upon honesty. So it may truthfully be said that, where a vast deal of business is done on credit, an exceedingly large per cent. of the people are regarded as honest. In our country a very large per cent. of contracts are faithfully fulfilled. Probably there is no nation in the world where so much business is done on credit as in the United States. The fact that the credit of the Republic is second to that of no other nation on the globe would seem to be at least an indication of a somewhat general diffusion of honesty.

The author of "Brutality and Avarice Triumphant" seems to be of the opinion that our country was demoralized by the war. They who fight for the right are not degraded—they are ennobled. When men face death and march to the mouths of the guns for a principle, they grow great; and if they come out of the conflict, they come with added moral grandeur; they become better men, better citizens, and they love more intensely than ever the great cause for the success of which they put their lives in pawn.

The period of the Revolution produced great men. After the great victory the sons of the heroes degen-

erated, and some of the greatest principles involved in the Revolution were almost forgotten.

During the Civil war the North grew great and the South was educated. Never before in the history of mankind was there such a period of moral exaltation. The names that shed the brightest, the whitest light on the pages of our history became famous then. Against the few who were actuated by base and unworthy motives let us set the great army that fought for the Republic, the millions who bared their breasts to the storm, the hundreds and hundreds of thousands who did their duty honestly, nobly, and went back to their wives and children with no thought except to preserve the liberties of themselves and their fellow-men.

Of course there were some men who did not do their duty—some men false to themselves and to their country. No one expects to find sixty-five millions of saints in America. A few years ago a lady complained to the president of a Western railroad that a brakeman had spoken to her with great rudeness. The president expressed his regret at the incident, and said among other things: "Madam, you have no idea how difficult it is for us to get gentlemen to fill all those places."

It is hardly to be expected that the American

people should excel all others in the arts, in poetry, and in fiction. We have been very busy taking possession of the Republic. It is hard to overestimate the courage, the industry, the self-denial it has required to fell the forests, to subdue the fields, to construct the roads, and to build the countless homes. What has been done is a certificate of the honesty and industry of our people.

It is not true that "one of the unwritten mottoes of our business morals seem to say in the plainest phraseology possible: 'Successful wrong is right.'" Men in this country are not esteemed simply because they are rich; inquiries are made as to how they made their money, as to how they use it. The American people do not fall upon their knees before the golden calf; the worst that can be said is that they think too much of the gold of the calf —and this distinction is seen by the calves themselves.

Nowhere in the world is honesty in business esteemed more highly than here. There are millions of business men—merchants, bankers, and men engaged in all trades and professions—to whom reputation is as dear as life.

There is one thing in the article "Brutality and Avarice Triumphant" that seems even more objec-

tionable than the rest, and that is the statement, or, rather, the insinuation, that all the crimes and the shortcomings of the American people can be accounted for by the fact that our Government is a Republic. We are told that not long ago a French official complained to a friend that he was compelled to employ twenty clerks to do the work done by four under the empire, and on being asked the reason answered: "It is the Republic." He was told that, as he was the head of the bureau, he could prevent the abuse, to which he replied: "I know I have the power; but I have been in this position for more than thirty years, and am now too old to learn another occupation, and I *must* make places for the friends of the deputies." And then it is added by General Hawkins: "*And so it is here.*"

It seems to me that it cannot be fairly urged that we have abused the Indians because we contend that all men have equal rights before the law, or because we insist that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. The probability is that a careful reading of the history of the world will show that nations under the control of kings and emperors have been guilty of some cruelty. To account for the bad we do by the good

we believe, is hardly logical. Our virtues should not be made responsible for our vices.

Is it possible that free institutions tend to the demoralization of men? Is a man dishonest because he is a man and maintains the rights of men? In order to be a moral nation must we be controlled by king or emperor? Is human liberty a mistake? Is it possible that a citizen of the great Republic attacks the liberty of his fellow-citizens? Is he willing to abdicate? Is he willing to admit that his rights are not equal to the rights of others? Is he, for the sake of what he calls morality, willing to become a serf, a servant or a slave?

Is it possible that "high character is impracticable" in this Republic? Is this the experience of the author of "Brutality and Avarice Triumphant"? Is it true that "intellectual achievement pays no dividends"? Is it not a fact that America is to-day the best market in the world for books, for music, and for art?

There is in our country no real foundation for these wide and sweeping slanders. This, in my judgment, is the best Government, the best country, in the world. The citizens of this Republic are, on the average, better clothed and fed and educated than any other people. They are fuller of life, more

progressive, quicker to take advantage of the forces of nature, than any other of the children of men. Here the burdens of government are lightest, the responsibilities of the individual greatest, and here, in my judgment, are to be worked out the most important problems of social science.

Here in America is a finer sense of what is due from man to man than you will find in other lands. We do not cringe to those whom chance has crowned; we stand erect.

Our sympathies are strong and quick. Generosity is almost a national failing. The hand of honest want is rarely left unfilled. Great calamities open the hearts and hands of all.

Here you will find democracy in the family—republicanism by the fireside. Say what you will, the family is apt to be patterned after the government. If a king is at the head of the nation, the husband imagines himself the monarch of the home. In this country we have carried into the family the idea on which the Government is based. Here husbands and wives are beginning to be equals.

The highest test of civilization is the treatment of women and children. By this standard America stands first among nations.

There is a magnitude, a scope, a grandeur, about

this country—an amplitude—that satisfies the heart and the imagination. We have our faults, we have our virtues, but our country is the best.

No American should ever write a line that can be sneeringly quoted by an enemy of the great Republic.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

REPLY TO THE
GAZETTE AND TELEGRAPH.

A REPLY TO THE CINCINNATI GAZETTE AND CATHOLIC TELEGRAPH.*

Question. Colonel, have you noticed the criticisms made on your lectures by the *Cincinnati Gazette* and the *Catholic Telegraph?*

Answer. I have read portions of the articles.

Question. What do you think of them?

Answer. Well, they are hardly of importance enough to form a distinct subject of thought.

Question. Well, what do you think of the attempted argument of the *Gazette* against your lecture on Moses?

Answer. The writer endeavors to show that considering the ignorance prevalent four thousand years ago, God did as well as one could reasonably expect; that God at that time did not have the advantage of telescope, microscope, and spectrum, and that for this reason a few mistakes need not excite our special wonder. He also shows that, although God was in favor of slavery he introduced some reforms;

* *The Cincinnati Gazette*, 1878. An Interview.

but whether the reforms were intended to perpetuate slavery or to help the slave is not stated. The article has nothing to do with my position. I am perfectly willing to admit that there is a land called Egypt; that the Jews were once slaves; that they got away and started a little country of their own. All this may be true without proving that they were miraculously fed in the wilderness, or that water ran up hill, or that God went into partnership with hornets or snakes. There may have been a man by the name of Moses without proving that sticks were turned into snakes.

A while ago a missionary addressed a Sunday school. In the course of his remarks he said that he had been to Mount Ararat, and had brought a stone from the mountain. He requested the children to pass in line before him so that they could all get a look at this wonderful stone. After they had all seen it he said: "You will as you grow up meet people who will deny that there ever was a flood, or that God saved Noah and the animals in the ark, and then you can tell them that you know better, because you saw a stone from the very mountain where the ark rested."

That is precisely the kind of argument used in the *Gazette*. The article was written by some one who

does not quite believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures himself, and were it not for the fear of hell, would probably say so.

I admit that there was such a man as Mohammed, such a city as Mecca, such a general as Omar, but I do not admit that God made known his will to Mohammed in any substantial manner. Of course the *Gazette* would answer all this by saying that Mohammed did exist, and that therefore God must have talked with him. I admit that there was such a general as Washington, but I do not admit that God kept him from being shot. I admit that there is a portrait of the Virgin Mary in Rome, but I do not admit that it shed tears. I admit that there was such a man as Moses, but I do not admit that God hunted for him in a tavern to kill him. I admit that there was such a priest as St. Denis, but I do not admit that he carried his head in his hand, after it was cut off, and swam the river, and put his head on again and eventually recovered. I admit that the article appeared in the *Gazette*, but I do not admit that it amounted to anything whatever.

Question. Did you notice what the *Catholic Telegraph* said about your lecture being ungrammatical?

Answer. Yes; I saw an extract from it. In the *Catholic Telegraph* occurs the following: "The lec-

ture was a failure as brilliant as Ingersoll's flashes of ungrammatical rhetoric." After making this statement with the hereditary arrogance of a priest, after finding fault with my "ungrammatical rhetoric" he then writes the following sentence: "It could not boast neither of novelty in argument or of attractive language." After this, nothing should be noticed that this gentleman says on the subject of grammar.

In this connection it may be proper for me to say that nothing is more remarkable than the fact that Christianity destroys manners. With one exception, no priest has ever written about me, so far as I know, except in an arrogant and insolent manner. They seem utterly devoid of the usual amenities of life. Every one who differs with them is vile, ignorant and malicious. But, after all, what can you expect of a gentleman who worships a God who will damn dimpled babes to an eternity of fire, simply because they were not baptized.

Question. This Catholic writer says that the oldest page of history and the newest page of science are nothing more than commentaries on the Mosaic Record. He says the Cosmogony of Moses has been believed in, and has been received as the highest truth by the very brightest names in science. What do you think of that statement?

Answer. I think it is without the least foundation in fact, and is substantially like the gentleman's theology, depending simply upon persistent assertion.

I see he quotes Cuvier as great authority. Cuvier denied that the fossil animals were in any way related to the animals now living, and believed that God had frequently destroyed all life upon the earth and then produced other forms. Agassiz was the last scientist of any standing who ventured to throw a crumb of comfort to this idea.

Question. Do you mean to say that all the great living scientists regard the Cosmogony of Moses as a myth?

Answer. I do. I say this: All men of science and men of sense look upon the Mosaic account as a simple myth. Humboldt, who stands in the same relation to science that Shakespeare did to the drama, held this opinion. The same is held by the best minds in Germany, by Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer in England, by John W. Draper and others in the United States. Whoever agrees with Moses is some poor frightened orthodox gentleman afraid of losing his soul or his salary, and as a rule, both are exceedingly small.

Question. Some people say that you slander the Bible in saying that God went into partnership with

hornets, and declare that there is no such passage in the Bible.

Answer. Well, let them read the twenty-eighth verse of the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, "And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite and the Hittite from before thee."

Question. Do you find in lecturing through the country that your ideas are generally received with favor?

Answer. Astonishingly so. There are ten times as many freethinkers as there were five years ago. In five years more we will be in the majority.

Question. Is it true that the churches, as a general thing, make strong efforts, as I have seen it stated, to prevent people from going to hear you?

Answer. Yes; in many places ministers have advised their congregations to keep away, telling them I was an exceedingly dangerous man. The result has generally been a full house, and I have hardly ever failed to publicly return my thanks to the clergy for acting as my advance agents.

Question. Do you ever meet Christian people who try to convert you?

Answer. Not often. But I do receive a great many anonymous letters, threatening me with the wrath of God, and calling my attention to the uncer-

tainty of life and the certainty of damnation. These letters are nearly all written in the ordinary Christian spirit; that is to say, full of hatred and impertinence.

Question. Don't you think it remarkable that the *Telegraph*, a Catholic paper, should quote with extravagant praise, an article from such an orthodox sheet as the *Gazette?*

Answer. I do not. All the churches must make common cause. All superstitions lead to Rome; all facts lead to science. In a few years all the churches will be united. This will unite all forms of liberalism. When that is done the days of superstition, of arrogance, of theology, will be numbered. It is very laughable to see a Catholic quoting scientific men in favor of Moses, when the same men would have taken great pleasure in swearing that the Catholic Church was the worst possible organization. That church should forever hold its peace. Wherever it has had authority it has destroyed human liberty. It reduced Italy to a hand organ, Spain to a guitar, Ireland to exile, Portugal to contempt. Catholicism is the upas tree in whose shade the intellect of man has withered. The recollection of the massacre of St. Bartholomew should make a priest silent, and the recollection of the same massacre should make a Protestant careful.

I can afford to be maligned by a priest, when the same party denounces Garibaldi, the hero of Italy, as a "pet tiger" to Victor Emmanuel. I could not afford to be praised by such a man. I thank him for his abuse.

Question. What do you think of the point that no one is able to judge of these things unless he is a Hebrew scholar?

Answer. I do not think it is necessary to understand Hebrew to decide as to the probability of springs gushing out of dead bones, or of the dead getting out of their graves, or of the probability of ravens keeping a hotel for wandering prophets. I hardly think it is necessary even to be a Greek scholar to make up my mind as to whether devils actually left a person and took refuge in the bodies of swine. Besides, if the Bible is not properly translated, the circulation ought to stop until the corrections are made. I am not accountable if God made a revelation to me in a language that he knew I never would understand. If he wishes to convey any information to my mind, he certainly should do it in English before he eternally damns me for paying no attention to it.

Question. Are not many of the contradictions in the Bible owing to mistranslations?

Answer. No. Nearly all of the mistranslations have been made to help out the text. It would be much worse, much more contradictory had it been correctly translated. Nearly all of the *mistakes*, as Mr. Weller would say, have been made for the purposes of harmony.

Question. How many errors do you suppose there are?

Answer. Well, I do not know. It has been reported that the American Bible Society appointed a committee to hunt for errors, and the said committee returned about twenty-four to twenty-five thousand. And thereupon the leading men said, to correct so many errors will destroy the confidence of the common people in the sacredness of the Scriptures. Thereupon it was decided not to correct any. I saw it stated the other day that a very prominent divine charged upon the Bible Society that they knew they were publishing a book full of errors.

Question. What is your opinion of the Bible anyhow?

Answer. My first objection is, it is not true.

Second.—It is not inspired.

Third.—It upholds human slavery.

Fourth.—It sanctions concubinage.

Fifth.—It commands the most infamously cruel

acts of war, such as the utter destruction of old men and little children.

Sixth.—After killing fathers, mothers and brothers, it commands the generals to divide the girls among the soldiers and priests. Beyond this, infamy has never gone. If any God made this order I am opposed to him.

Seventh.—It upholds human sacrifice, or, at least, seems to, from the following:

"Notwithstanding no devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of *man* and *beast*, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord."

"None devoted, which shall be devoted, of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death." (Twenty-seventh Chapter of Leviticus, 28th and 29th verses.)

Eighth.—Its laws are absurd, and the punishments cruel and unjust. Think of killing a man for making hair oil! Think of killing a man for picking up sticks on Sunday!

Ninth.—It upholds polygamy.

Tenth.—It knows nothing of astronomy, nothing of geology, nothing of any science whatever.

Eleventh.—It is opposed to religious liberty, and

teaches a man to kill his own wife if she differs with him on religion; that is to say, if he is orthodox. There is no book in the world in which can be found so much that is thoroughly despicable and infamous. Of course there are some good passages, some good sentiments. But they are, at least in the Old Testment, few and far between.

Twelfth.—It treats woman like a beast, and man like a slave. It fills heaven with tyranny, and earth with hypocrisy and grief.

Question. Do you think any book inspired?

Answer. No. I do not think any book is inspired. But, if it had been the intention of this God to give to man an inspired book, he should have waited until Shakespeare's time, and used Shakespeare as the instrument. Then there never would have been any doubt as to the inspiration of the book. There is more beauty, more goodness, more intelligence in Shakespeare than in all the sacred books of this world.

Question. What do you think as a freethinker of the Sunday question in Cincinnati?

Answer. I think that it is a good thing to have a day of recreation, a day of rest, a day of joy, not a day of dyspepsia and theology. I am in favor of

operas and theaters, music and happiness on Sunday. I am opposed to all excesses on any day. If the clergy will take half the pains to make the people intelligent that they do to make them superstitious, the world will soon have advanced so far that it can enjoy itself without excess. The ministers want Sunday for themselves. They want everybody to come to church because they can go no where else. It is like the story of a man coming home at three o'clock in the morning, who, upon being asked by his wife how he could come at such a time of night, replied, "The fact is, every other place is shut up." The orthodox clergy know that their churches will remain empty if any other place remains open. Do not forget to say that I mean orthodox churches, orthodox clergy, because I have great respect for Unitarians and Universalists.

INTERVIEWS ON
CHIEF JUSTICE COMEGYS.

AN INTERVIEW ON CHIEF JUSTICE COMEGYS.*

Question. I understand, Colonel Ingersoll, that you have been indicted in the State of Delaware for the crime of blasphemy?

Answer. Well, not exactly indicted. The Judge, who, I believe, is the Chief Justice of the State, dedicated the new court-house at Wilmington to the service of the Lord, by a charge to the grand jury, in which he almost commanded them to bring in a bill of indictment against me, for what he was pleased to call the crime of blasphemy. Now, as a matter of fact, there can be no crime committed by man against God, provided always that a correct definition of the Deity has been given by the orthodox churches. They say that he is infinite. If so, he is conditionless. I can injure a man by changing his conditions. Take from a man water, and he perishes of thirst; take from him air, and he suffocates; he may die from too much, or too little heat. That

* *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1881.

is because he is a conditioned being. But if God is conditionless, he cannot in any way be affected by what anybody else may do; and, consequently, a sin against God is as impossible as a sin against the principle of the lever or inclined plane. This crime called blasphemy was invented by priests for the purpose of defending doctrines not able to take care of themselves. Blasphemy is a kind of breastwork behind which hypocrisy has crouched for thousands of years. Injustice is the only blasphemy that can be committed, and justice is the only true worship. Man can sin against man, but not against God. But even if man could sin against God, it has always struck me that an infinite being would be entirely able to take care of himself without the assistance of a Chief Justice. Men have always been violating the rights of men, under the plea of defending the rights of God, and nothing, for ages, was so perfectly delightful to the average Christian as to gratify his revenge, and get God in his debt at the same time. Chief Justice Comegys has taken this occasion to lay up for himself what he calls treasures in heaven, and on the last great day he will probably rely on a certified copy of this charge. The fact that he thinks the Lord needs help satisfies me that in that particular neighborhood I am a litttle ahead.

The fact is, I never delivered but one lecture in Delaware. That lecture, however, had been preceded by a Republican stump speech; and, to tell you the truth, I imagine that the stump speech is what a Yankee would call the heft of the offence. It is really hard for me to tell whether I have blasphemed the Deity or the Democracy. Of course I have no personal feeling whatever against the Judge. In fact he has done me a favor. He has called the attention of the civilized world to certain barbarian laws that disfigure and disgrace the statute books of most of the States. These laws were passed when our honest ancestors were burning witches, trading Quaker children to the Barbadoes for rum and molasses, branding people upon the forehead, boring their tongues with hot irons, putting one another in the pillory, and, generally, in the name of God, making their neighbors as uncomfortable as possible. We have outgrown these laws without repealing them. They are, as a matter of fact, in most communities actually dead; but in some of the States, like Delaware, I suppose they could be enforced, though there might be trouble in selecting twelve men, even in Delaware, without getting one man broad enough, sensible enough, and honest enough, to do justice. I hardly think it would be possible in

any State to select a jury in the ordinary way that would convict any person charged with what is commonly known as blasphemy.

All the so-called Christian churches have accused each other of being blasphemers in turn. The Catholics denounced the Presbyterians as blasphemers, the Presbyterians denounced the Baptists, the Baptists, the Presbyterians, and the Catholics all united in denouncing the Quakers, and they all together denounced the Unitarians—called them blasphemers because they did not acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ—the Unitarians only insisting that three infinite beings were not necessary that one infinite being could do all the business, and that the other two were absolutely useless. This was called blasphemy.

Then all the churches united to call the Universalists blasphemers. I can remember when a Universalist was regarded with a thousand times more horror than an infidel is to-day. There is this strange thing about the history of theology—nobody has ever been charged with blasphemy who thought God bad. For instance, it never would have excited any theological hatred if a man had insisted that God would finally damn everybody. Nearly all heresy has consisted in making God better than the

majority in the churches thought him to be. The orthodox Christian never will forgive the Universalist for saying that God is too good to damn anybody eternally. Now, all these sects have charged each other with blasphemy, without anyone of them knowing really what blasphemy is. I suppose they have occasionally been honest, because they have mostly been ignorant. It is said that Torquemada used to shed tears over the agonies of his victims and that he recommended slow burning, not because he wished to inflict pain, but because he really desired to give the gentleman or lady he was burning a chance to repent of his or her sins, and make his or her peace with God previous to becoming a cinder.

The root, foundation, germ and cause of nearly all religious persecution is the idea that some certain belief is necessary to salvation. If orthodox Christians are right in this idea, then persecution of all heretics and infidels is a duty. If I have the right to defend my body from attack, surely I should have a like right to defend my soul. Under our laws I could kill any man who was endeavoring, for example, to take the life of my child. How much more would I be justified in killing any wretch who was endeavoring to convince my child of the truth

of a doctrine which, if believed, would result in the eternal damnation of that child's soul?

If the Christian religion, as it is commonly understood, is true, no infidel should be allowed to live; every heretic should be hunted from the wide world as you would hunt a wild beast. They should not be allowed to speak, they should not be allowed to poison the minds of women and children; in other words, they should not be allowed to empty heaven and fill hell. The reason I have liberty in this country is because the Christians of this country do not believe their doctrine. The passage from the Bible, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," coupled with the assurance that, "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and whoso believeth not shall be damned," is the foundation of most religious persecution. Every word in that passage has been fire and fagot, whip and sword, chain and dungeon. That one passage has probably caused more agony among men, women and children, than all the passages of all other books that were ever printed. Now, this passage was not in the book of Mark when originally written, but was put there many years after the gentleman who evolved the book of Mark from his inner consciousness, had passed away. It was put

there by the church—that is to say, by hypocrisy and priestly craft, to bind the consciences of men and force them to come under ecclesiastical and spiritual power; and that passage has been received and believed, and been made binding by law in most countries ever since.

What would you think of a law compelling a man to admire Shakespeare, or calling it blasphemy to laugh at Hamlet? Why is not a statute necessary to uphold the reputation of Raphael or of Michael Angelo? Is it possible that God cannot write a book good enough and great enough and grand enough not to excite the laughter of his children? Is it possible that he is compelled to have his literary reputation supported by the State of Delaware?

There is another very strange thing about this business. Admitting that the Bible is the work of God, it is not any more his work than are the sun, the moon and the stars or the earth, and if for disbelieving this Bible we are to be damned forever, we ought to be equally damned for a mistake in geology or astronomy. The idea of allowing a man to go to heaven who swears that the earth is flat, and damning a fellow who thinks it is round, but who has his honest doubts about Joshua, seems to me to

be perfectly absurd. It seems to me that in this view of it, it is just as necessary to be right on the subject of the equator as on the doctrine of infant baptism.

Question. What was in your judgment the motive of Judge Comegys? Is he a personal enemy of yours? Have you ever met him? Have you any idea what reason he had for attacking you?

Answer. I do not know the gentleman, personally. Outside of the political reason I have intimated, I do not know why he attacked me. I once delivered a lecture entitled "What must we do to be Saved?" in the city of Wilmington, and in that lecture I proceeded to show, or at least tried to show, that Matthew, Mark and Luke knew nothing about Christianity, as it is understood in Delaware; and I also endeavored to show that all men have an equal right to think, and that a man is only under obligations to be honest with himself, and with all men, and that he is not accountable for the amount of mind that he has been endowed with—otherwise it might be Judge Comegys himself would be damned—but that he is only accountable for the use he makes of what little mind he has received. I held that the safest thing for every man was to be absolutely honest, and to express his honest thought. After the delivery of this

lecture various ministers in Wilmington began replying, and after the preaching of twenty or thirty sermons, not one of which, considered as a reply, was a success, I presume it occurred to these ministers that the shortest and easiest way would be to have me indicted and imprisoned.

In this I entirely agree with them. It is the old and time-honored way. I believe it is, as it always has been, easier to kill two infidels than to answer one; and if Christianity expects to stem the tide that is now slowly rising over the intellectual world, it must be done by brute force, and by brute force alone. And it must be done pretty soon, or they will not have the brute force. It is doubtful if they have a majority of the civilized world on their side to-day. No heretic ever would have been burned if he could have been answered. No theologian ever called for the help of the law until his logic gave out.

I suppose Judge Comegys to be a Presbyterian. Where did he get his right to be a Presbyterian? Where did he get his right to decide which creed is the correct one? How did he dare to pit his little brain against the word of God? He may say that his father was a Presbyterian. But what was his grandfather? If he will only go back far enough he will, in all probability, find that his ancestors were Cath-

olics, and if he will go back a little farther still, that they were barbarians; that at one time they were naked, and had snakes tattooed on their bodies. What right had they to change? Does he not perceive that had the savages passed the same kind of laws that now exist in Delaware, they could have prevented any change in belief? They would have had a whipping-post, too, and they would have said: "Any gentleman found without snakes tattooed upon his body shall be held guilty of blasphemy;" and all the ancestors of this Judge, and of these ministers would have said, Amen!

What right had the first Presbyterian to be a Presbyterian? He must have been a blasphemer first. A small dose of pillory might have changed his religion. Does this Judge think that Delaware is incapable of any improvement in a religious point of view? Does he think that the Presbyterians of Delaware are not only the best now, but that they will forever be the best that God can make? Is there to be no advancement? Has there been no advancement? Are the pillory and the whipping-post to be used to prevent an excess of thought in the county of New Castle? Has the county ever been troubled that way? Has this Judge ever had symptons of any such disease? Now, I want

it understood that I like this Judge, and my principal reason for liking him is that he is the last of his race. He will be so inundated with the ridicule of mankind that no other Chief Justice in Delaware, or anywhere else, will ever follow his illustrious example. The next Judge will say: "So far as I am concerned, the Lord may attend to his own business, and deal with infidels as he may see proper." Thus great good has been accomplished by this Judge, which shows, as Burns puts it, "that a pot can be boiled, even if the devil tries to prevent it."

Question. How will this action of Delaware, in your opinion, affect the other States?

Answer. Probably a few other States needed an example exactly of this kind. New Jersey, in all probability, will say: "Delaware is perfectly ridiculous," and yet, had Delaware waited awhile, New Jersey might have done the same thing. Maryland will exclaim: "Did you ever see such a fool!" And yet I was threatened in that State. The average American citizen, taking into consideration the fact that we are blest, or cursed, with about one hundred thousand preachers, and that these preachers preach on the average one hundred thousand sermons a week—some of which are heard clear through—will unquestionably hold that a man who

happens to differ with all these parsons ought to have and shall have the privilege of expressing his mind; and that the one hundred thousand clergymen ought to be able to put down the one man who happens to disagree with them, without calling on the army or navy to do it, especially when it is taken into consideration that an infinite God is already on their side. Under these circumstances, the average American will say: "Let him talk, and let the hundred thousand preachers answer him to their hearts' content." So that in my judgment the result of the action of Delaware will be: First, to liberalize all other States, and second, finally to liberalize Delaware itself. In many of the States they have the same idiotic kind of laws as those found in Delaware—with the exception of those blessed institutions for the spread of the Gospel, known as the pillory and the whipping-post. There is a law in Maine by which a man can be put into the penitentiary for denying the providence of God, and the day of judgment. There are similar laws in most of the New England States. One can be imprisoned in Maryland for a like offence.

In North Carolina no man can hold office that has not a certain religious belief; and so in several other of the Southern States. In half the States of

this Union, if my wife and children should be murdered before my eyes, I would not be allowed in a court of justice to tell who the murderer was. You see that, for hundreds of years, Christianity has endeavored to put the brand of infamy on every intellectual brow.

Question. I see that one objection to your lectures urged by Judge Comegys on the grand jury is, that they tend to a breach of the peace—to riot and bloodshed.

Answer. Yes; Judge Comegys seems to be afraid that people who love their enemies will mob their friends. He is afraid that those disciples who, when smitten on one cheek turn the other to be smitten also, will get up a riot. He seems to imagine that good Christians feel called upon to violate the commands of the Lord in defence of the Lord's reputation. If Christianity produces people who cannot hear their doctrines discussed without raising mobs, and shedding blood, the sooner it is stopped being preached the better.

There is not the slightest danger of any infidel attacking a Christian for his belief, and there never will be an infidel mob for such a purpose. Christians can teach and preach their views to their hearts' content. They can send all unbelievers to an eternal

hell, if it gives them the least pleasure, and they may bang their Bibles as long as their fists last, but no infidel will be in danger of raising a riot to stop them, or put them down by brute force, or even by an appeal to the law, and I would advise Judge Comegys, if he wishes to compliment Christianity, to change his language and say that he feared a breach of the peace might be committed by the infidels—not by the Christians. He may possibly have thought that it was my intention to attack his State. But I can assure him, that if ever I start a warfare of that kind, I shall take some State of my size. There is no glory to be won in wringing the neck of a "Blue Hen!"

Question. I should judge, Colonel, that you are prejudiced against the State of Delaware?

Answer. Not by any means. Oh, no! I know a great many splendid people in Delaware, and since I have known more of their surroundings, my admiration for them has increased. They are, on the whole, a very good people in that State. I heard a story the other day: An old fellow in Delaware has been for the last twenty or thirty years gathering peaches there in their season—a kind of peach tramp. One day last fall, just as the season closed, he was leaning sadly against a tree, "Boys!" said he,

"I'd like to come back to Delaware a hundred years from now." The boys asked, "What for?" The old fellow replied: "Just to see how damned little they'd get the baskets by that time." And it occurred to me that people who insist that twenty-two quarts make a bushel, should be as quiet as possible on the subject of blasphemy.

AN INTERVIEW ON CHIEF JUSTICE COMEGYS.*

Question. Have you read Chief Justice Comegys' compliments to you before the Delaware grand jury?

Answer. Yes, I have read his charge, in which he relies upon the law passed in 1740. After reading his charge it seemed to me as though he had died about the date of the law, had risen from the dead, and had gone right on where he had left off. I presume he is a good man, but compared with other men, is something like his State when compared with other States.

A great many people will probably regard the charge of Judge Comegys as unchristian, but I do not. I consider that the law of Delaware is in exact accord with the Bible, and that the pillory, the whipping-post, and the suppression of free speech are the natural fruit of the Old and New Testament.

Delaware is right. Christianity can not succeed, can not exist, without the protection of law. Take

* *Chicago Times*, Feb. 14, 1881.

from orthodox Christianity the protection of law, and all church property would be taxed like other property. The Sabbath would be no longer a day devoted to superstition. Everyone could express his honest thought upon every possible subject. Everyone, notwithstanding his belief, could testify in a court of justice. In other words, honesty would be on an equality with hypocrisy. Science would stand on a level, so far as the law is concerned, with superstition. Whenever this happens the end of orthodox Christianity will be near.

By Christianity I do not mean charity, mercy, kindness, forgiveness. I mean no natural virtue, because all the natural virtues existed and had been practiced by hundreds and thousands of millions before Christ was born. There certainly were some good men even in the days of Christ in Jerusalem, before his death.

By Christianity I mean the ideas of redemption, atonement, a good man dying for a bad man, and the bad man getting a receipt in full. By Christianity I mean that system that insists that in the next world a few will be forever happy, while the many will be eternally miserable. Christianity, as I have explained it, must be protected, guarded, and sustained by law. It was founded by the sword—

that is to say, by physical force,—and must be preserved by like means.

In many of the States of the Union an infidel is not allowed to testify. In the State of Delaware, if Alexander von Humboldt were living, he could not be a witness, although he had more brains than the State of Delaware has ever produced, or is likely to produce as long as the laws of 1740 remain in force. Such men as Huxley, Tyndall and Haeckel could be fined and imprisoned in the State of Delaware, and, in fact, in many States of this Union.

Christianity, in order to defend itself, puts the brand of infamy on the brow of honesty. Christianity marks with a letter "C," standing for "convict" every brain that is great enough to discover the frauds. I have no doubt that Judge Comegys is a good and sincere Christian. I believe that he, in his charge, gives an exact reflection of the Jewish Jehovah. I believe that every word he said was in exact accord with the spirit of orthodox Christianity. Against this man personally I have nothing to say. I know nothing of his character except as I gather it from this charge, and after reading the charge I am forced simply to say, Judge Comegys is a Christian.

It seems, however, that the grand jury dared to

take no action, notwithstanding they had been counseled to do so by the Judge. Although the Judge had quoted to them the words of George I. of blessed memory; although he had quoted to them the words of Lord Mansfield, who became a Judge simply because of his hatred of the English colonists, simply because he despised liberty in the new world; notwithstanding the fact that I could have been punished with insult, with imprisonment, and with stripes, and with every form of degradation; notwithstanding that only a few years ago I could have been branded upon the forehead, bored through the tongue, maimed and disfigured, still, such has been the advance even in the State of Delaware, owing, it may be, in great part to the one lecture delivered by me, that the grand jury absolutely refused to indict me.

The grand jury satisfied themselves and their consciences simply by making a report in which they declared that my lecture had "no parallel in the habits of respectable vagabondism;" that I was "an arch-blasphemer and reviler of God and religion," and recommended that should I ever attempt to lecture again I should be taught that in Delaware blasphemy is a crime punishable by fine and imprisonment. I have no doubt that every mem-

ber of the grand jury signing this report was entirely honest; that he acted in exact accord with what he understood to be the demand of the Christian religion. I must admit that for Christians, the report is exceedingly mild and gentle.

I have now in the house, letters that passed between certain bishops in the fifteenth century, in which they discussed the propriety of cutting out the tongues of heretics before they were burned. Some of the bishops were in favor of and some against it. One argument for cutting out their tongues which seemed to have settled the question was, that unless the tongues of heretics were cut out they might scandalize the gentlemen who were burning them, by blasphemous remarks during the fire. I would commend these letters to Judge Comegys and the members of the grand jury.

I want it distinctly understood that I have nothing against Judge Comegys or the grand jury. They act as 'most anybody would, raised in Delaware, in the shadow of the whipping-post and the pillory. We must remember that Delaware was a slave State; that the Bible became extremely dear to the people because it upheld that peculiar institution. We must remember that the Bible was the block on which mother and child stood for sale when

they were separated by the Christians of Delaware. The Bible was regarded as the title-pages to slavery, and as the book of all books that gave the right to masters to whip mothers and to sell children.

There are many offences now for which the punishment is whipping and standing in the pillory; where persons are convicted of certain crimes and sent to the penitentiary, and upon being discharged from the penitentiary are furnished by the State with a dark jacket plainly marked on the back with a large Roman "C," the letter to be of a light color. This they are to wear for six months after being discharged, and if they are found at any time without the dark jacket and the illuminated "C" they are to be punished with twenty lashes upon the bare back. The object, I presume, of this law, is to drive from the State all the discharged convicts for the benefit of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland—that is to say, other Christian communities. A cruel people make cruel laws.

The objection I have to the whipping-post is that it is a punishment which cannot be inflicted by a gentleman. The person who administers the punishment must, of necessity, be fully as degraded as the person who receives it. I am opposed to any kind of punishment that cannot be administered by

a gentleman. I am opposed to corporal punishment everywhere. It should be taken from the asylums and penitentiaries, and any man who would apply the lash to the naked back of another is beneath the contempt of honest people.

Question. Have you seen that Henry Bergh has introduced in the New York Legislature a bill providing for whipping as a punishment for wife-beating?

Answer. The objection I have mentioned is fatal to Mr. Bergh's bill. He will be able to get persons to beat wife-beaters, who, under the same circumstances, would be wife-beaters themselves. If they are not wife-beaters when they commence the business of beating others, they soon will be. I think that wife-beating in great cities could be stopped by putting all the wife-beaters at work at some government employment, the value of the work, however, to go to the wives and children. The trouble now is that most of the wife-beating is among the extremely poor, so that the wife by informing against her husband, takes the last crust out of her own mouth. If you substitute whipping or flogging for the prison here, you will in the first place prevent thousands of wives from informing, and in many cases, where the wife would inform, she would afterward be

murdered by the flogged brute. This brute would naturally resort to the same means to reform his wife that the State had resorted to for the purpose of reforming him. Flogging would beget flogging. Mr. Bergh is a man of great kindness of heart. When he reads that a wife has been beaten, he says the husband deserves to be beaten himself. But if Mr. Bergh was to be the executioner, I imagine you could not prove by the back of the man that the punishment had been inflicted.

Another good remedy for wife-beating is the abolition of the Catholic Church. We should also do away with the idea that a marriage is a sacrament, and that there is any God who is rendered happy by seeing a husband and wife live together, although the husband gets most of his earthly enjoyment from whipping his wife. No woman should live with a man a moment after he has struck her. Just as the idea of liberty enlarges, confidence in the whip and fist, in the kick and blow, will diminish. Delaware occupies toward freethinkers precisely the same position that a wife-beater does toward the wife. Delaware knows that there are no reasons sufficient to uphold Christianity, consequently these reasons are supplemented with the pillory and the whipping-post. The whipping-post

is considered one of God's arguments, and the pillory is a kind of moral suasion, the use of which fills heaven with a kind of holy and serene delight. I am opposed to the religion of brute force, but all these frightful things have grown principally out of a belief in eternal punishment and out of the further idea that a certain belief is necessary to avoid eternal pain.

If Christianity is right, Delaware is right. If God will damn every body forever simply for being intellectually honest, surely he ought to allow the good people of Delaware to imprison the same gentleman for two months. Of course there are thousands and thousands of good people in Delaware, people who have been in other States, people who have listened to Republican speeches, people who have read the works of scientists, who hold the laws of 1740 in utter abhorrence; people who pity Judge Comegys and who have a kind of sympathy for the grand jury.

You will see that at the last election Delaware lacked only six or seven hundred of being a civilized State, and probably in 1884 will stand redeemed and regenerated, with the laws of 1740 expunged from the statute book. Delaware has not had the best of opportunities. You must remember that it is next

to New Jersey, which is quite an obstacle in the path of progress. It is just beyond Maryland, which is another obstacle. I heard the other day that God originally made oysters with legs, and afterward took them off, knowing that the people of Delaware would starve to death before they would run to catch anything. Judge Comegys is the last judge who will make such a charge in the United States. He has immortalized himself as the last mile-stone on that road. He is the last of his race. No more can be born. Outside of this he probably was a very clever man, and it may be, he does not believe a word he utters. The probability is that he has underestimated the intelligence of the people of Delaware. I am afraid to think that he is entirely honest, for fear that I may underestimate him intellectually, and overestimate him morally. Nothing could tempt me to do this man injustice, though I could hardly add to the injury he has done himself. He has called attention to laws that ought to be repealed, and to lectures that ought to be repeated. I feel in my heart that he has done me a great service, second only to that for which I am indebted to the grand jury. Had the Judge known me personally he probably would have said nothing. Should I have the misfortune to be arrested in his State and sentenced to two months of solitary con-

finement, the Judge having become acquainted with me during the trial, would probably insist on spending most of his time in my cell. At the end of the two months he would, I think, lay himself liable to the charge of blasphemy, providing he had honor enough to express his honest thought. After all, it is all a question of honesty. Every man is right. I cannot convince myself there is any God who will ever damn a man for having been honest. This gives me a certain hope for the Judge and the grand jury.

For two or three days I have been thinking what joy there must have been in heaven when Jehovah heard that Delaware was on his side, and remarked to the angels in the language of the late Adjt. Gen. Thomas: "The eyes of all Delaware are upon you."

REPLY TO
REV. DRS. THOMAS AND LORIMER.

A REPLY TO REV'D DRS. THOMAS AND LORIMER.*

Ladies and Gentlemen:

WHEREVER I lecture, as a rule, some ministers think it their duty to reply for the purpose of showing either that I am unfair, or that I am blasphemous, or that I laugh. And laughing has always been considered by theologians as a crime. Ministers have always said you will have no respect for our ideas unless you are solemn. Solemnity is a condition precedent to believing anything without evidence. And if you can only get a man solemn enough, awed enough, he will believe anything.

In this city the Rev. Dr. Thomas has made a few remarks, and I may say by way of preface that I have always held him in the highest esteem. He struggles, according to his statement, with the problem of my sincerity, and he about half concludes that I am not sincere. There is a little of the

*Col. Ingersoll filled McVicker's Theatre again yesterday afternoon, when he answered the question "What Must We Do to Be Saved?" But before doing so he replied to the recent criticisms of city clergymen on his "Talmagian Theology."—*Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 27, 1882.

minister left in Dr. Thomas. Ministers always account for a difference of opinion by attacking the motive. Now, to him, it makes no difference whether I am sincere or insincere; the question is, Can my argument be answered? Suppose you could prove that the maker of the multiplication table held mathematics in contempt; what of it? Ten times ten would be a hundred still.

My sincerity has nothing to do with the force of the argument—not the slightest. But this gentleman begins to suspect that I am doing what I do for the sake of applause. What a commentary on the Christian religion, that, after they have been preaching it for sixteen or eighteen hundred years, a man attacks it for the sake of popularity—a man attacks it for the purpose of winning applause! When I commenced to speak upon this subject there was no appreciable applause; most of my fellow-citizens differed with me; and I was denounced as though I had been a wild beast. But I have lived to see the majority of the men and women of intellect in the United States on my side; I have lived to see the church deny her creed; I have lived to see ministers apologize in public for what they preached; and a great and glorious work is going on until, in a little while, you will not find one of them, unless it is

some old petrifaction of the red-stone period, who will admit that he ever believed in the Trinity, in the Atonement, or in the doctrine of Eternal Agony. The religion preached in the pulpits does not satisfy the intellect of America, and if Dr. Thomas wishes to know why people go to hear infidelity it is this: Because they are not satisfied with the orthodox Christianity of the day. That is the reason. They are beginning to hold it in contempt.

But this gentleman imagines that I am insincere because I attacked certain doctrines of the Bible. I attacked the doctrine of eternal pain. I hold it in infinite and utter abhorrence. And if there be a God in this universe who made a hell; if there be a God in this universe who denies to any human being the right of reformation, then that God is not good, that God is not just, and the future of man is infinitely dark. I despise that doctrine, and I have done what little I could to get that horror from the cradle, that horror from the hearts of mothers, that horror from the hearts of husbands and fathers, and sons, and brothers, and sisters. It is a doctrine that turns to ashes all the humanities of life and all the hopes of mankind. I despise it.

And the gentleman also charges that I am wanting in reverence. I admit here to-day that I have no

reverence for a falsehood. I do not care how old it is, and I do not care who told it, whether the men were inspired or not. I have no reverence for what I believe to be false, and in determining what is false I go by my reason. And whenever another man gives me an argument I examine it. If it is good I follow it. If it is bad I throw it away. I have no reverence for any book that upholds human slavery. I despise such a book. I have no reverence for any book that upholds or palliates the infamous institution of polygamy. I have no reverence for any book that tells a husband to kill his wife if she differs with him upon the subject of religion. I have no reverence for any book that defends wars of conquest and extermination. I have no reverence for a God that orders his legions to slay the old and helpless, and to whet the edge of the sword with the blood of mothers and babes. I have no reverence for such a book; neither have I any reverence for the author of that book. No matter whether he be God or man, I have no reverence. I have no reverence for the miracles of the Bible. I have no reverence for the story that God allowed bears to tear children in pieces. I have no reverence for the miraculous, but I have reverence for the truth, for justice, for charity,

for humanity, for intellectual liberty, and for human progress.

I have the right to do my own thinking. I am going to do it. I have never met any minister that I thought had brain enough to think for himself and for me too. I do my own. I have no reverence for barbarism, no matter how ancient it may be, and no reverence for the savagery of the Old Testament; no reverence for the malice of the New. And let me tell you here to-night that the Old Testament is a thousand times better than the New. The Old Testament threatened no vengeance beyond the grave. God was satisfied when his enemy was dead. It was reserved for the New Testament—it was reserved for universal benevolence—to rend the veil between time and eternity and fix the horrified gaze of man upon the abyss of hell. The New Testament is just as much worse than the Old, as hell is worse than sleep. And yet it is the fashion to say that the Old Testament is bad and that the New Testament is good. I have no reverence for any book that teaches a doctrine contrary to my reason; no reverence for any book that teaches a doctrine contrary to my heart; and, no matter how old it is, no matter how many have believed it, no matter how many have died on account of it, no

matter how many live for it, I have no reverence for that book, and I am glad of it.

Dr. Thomas seems to think that I should approach these things with infinite care, that I should not attack slavery, or polygamy, or religious persecution, but that I should "mildly suggest"—mildly,—should not hurt anybody's feelings. When I go to church the ministers tell me I am going to hell. When I meet one I tell him, "There is no hell," and he says: "What do you want to hurt our feelings for?" He wishes me mildly to suggest that the sun and moon did not stop, that may be the bears only frightened the children, and that, after all, Lot's wife was only scared. Why, there was a minister in this city of Chicago who imagined that his congregation were progressive, and, in his pulpit, he said that he did not believe the story of Lot's wife—said that he did not think that any sensible man would believe that a woman was changed into salt; and they tried him, and the congregation thought he was entirely too fresh. And finally he went before that church and admitted that he was mistaken, and owned up to the chloride of sodium, and said: "I not only take the Bible *cum grano salis*, but with a whole barrelful."

My doctrine is, if you do not believe a thing, say

so say so; no need of going away around the bush and suggesting may be, perhaps, possibly, peradventure. That is the ministerial way, but I do not like it.

I am also charged with making an onslaught upon the good as well as the bad. I say here to-day that never in my life have I said one word against honesty, one word against liberty, one word against charity, one word against any institution that is good. I attack the bad, not the good, and I would like to have some minister point out in some lecture or speech that I have delivered, one word against the good, against the highest happiness of the human race.

I have said all I was able to say in favor of justice, in favor of liberty, in favor of home, in favor of wife and children, in favor of progress, and in favor of universal kindness; but not one word in favor of the bad, and I never expect to.

Dr. Thomas also attacks my statement that the brain thinks in spite of us.

Doesn't it? Can any man tell what he is going to think to-morrow? You see, you hear, you taste, you feel, you smell—these are the avenues by which Nature approaches the brain, the consequence of this is thought, and you cannot by any possibility help thinking.

Neither can you determine what you will think. These impressions are made independently of your will. "But," says this reverend doctor, "Whence comes this conception of space?" I can tell him. There is such a thing as matter. We conceive that matter occupies room—space—and, in our minds, space is simply the opposite of matter. And it comes naturally—not supernaturally.

Does the gentleman contend there had to be a revelation of God for us to conceive of a place where there is nothing? We know there is something. We can think of the opposite of something, and therefore we say space. "But," says this gentleman, "Where do we get the idea of good and bad?" I can tell him; no trouble about that. Every man has the capacity to enjoy and the capacity to suffer—every man. Whenever a man enjoys himself he calls that good; whenever he suffers he calls that bad. The animals that are useful to him he calls good; the poisonous, the hurtful, he calls bad. The vegetables that he can eat and use he calls good; those that are of no use except to choke the growth of the good ones, he calls bad. When the sun shines, when everything in nature is out that ministers to him, he says "this is good;" when the storm comes and blows down his hut, when the frost

comes and lays down his crop, he says "this is bad." And all phenomena that affect men well he calls good; all that affect him ill he calls bad.

Now, then, the foundation of the idea of right and wrong is the effect in nature that we are capable of enjoying or capable of suffering. That is the foundation of conscience; and if man could not suffer, if man could not enjoy, we never would have dreamed of the word conscience; and the words right and wrong never could have passed human lips. There are no supernatural fields. We get our ideas from experience—some of them from our forefathers, many from experience. A man works—food does not come of itself. A man works to raise it, and, after he has worked in the sun and heat, do you think it is necessary that he should have a revelation from heaven before he thinks that he has a better right to it than the man who did not work? And yet, according to these gentlemen, we never would have known it was wrong to steal had not the Ten Commandments been given from Mount Sinai.

You go into a savage country where they never heard of the Bible, and let a man hunt all day for game, and finally get one little bird, and the hungry man that staid at home endeavor to take it from him, and you would see whether he would need a

direct revelation from God in order to make up his mind who had the better right to that bird. Our ideas of right and wrong are born of our surroundings, and if a man will think for a moment he will see it. But they deny that the mind thinks in spite of us. I heard a story of a man who said, "No man can think of one thing a minute, he will think of something else." Well, there was a little Methodist preacher. He said he could think of a thing a minute—that he could say the Lord's Prayer and never think of another thing. "Well," said the man, "I'll tell you what I will do. There is the best road-horse in the country. I will give you that horse if you will just say the Lord's Prayer, and not think of another thing." And the little fellow shut up his eyes: "Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done—I suppose you will throw in the saddle and bridle?"

I have always insisted, and I shall always insist, until I find some fact in Nature correcting the statement, that Nature sows the seeds of thought—that every brain is a kind of field where the seeds are sown, and that some are very poor, and some are very barren, and some are very rich. That is my opinion.

Again he asks: "If one is not responsible for his thought, why is any one blamed for thinking as he does?" It is not a question of blame, it is a question of who is right—a question of who is wrong. Admit that every one thinks exactly as he must, that does not show that his thought is right; that does not show that his thought is the highest thought. Admit that every piece of land in the world produces what it must; that does not prove that the land covered with barren rocks and a little moss is just as good as the land covered with wheat or corn; neither does it prove that the mind has to act as the wheat or the corn; neither does it prove that the land had any choice as to what it would produce. I hold men responsible not for their thoughts; I hold men responsible for their actions. And I have said a thousand times: Physical liberty is this—the right to do anything that does not interfere with another—in other words, to act right; and intellectual liberty is this—the right to think right, and the right to think wrong, provided you do your best to think right. I have always said it, and I expect to say it always.

The reverend gentleman is also afflicted with the gradual theory. I believe in that theory.

If you will leave out inspiration, if you will leave

out the direct interference of an infinite God, the gradual theory is right. It is a theory of evolution.

I admit that astronomy has been born of astrology, that chemistry came from the black art; and I also contend that religion will be lost in science. I believe in evolution. I believe in the budding of the seed, the shining of the sun, the dropping of the rain; I believe in the spreading and the growing; and that is as true in every other department of the world as it is in vegetation. I believe it; but that does not account for the Bible doctrine. We are told we have a book absolutely inspired, and it will not do to say God gradually grows. If he is infinite now, he knows as much as he ever will. If he has been always infinite, he knew as much at the time he wrote the Bible as he knows to-day; and, consequently, whatever he said then must be as true now as it was then. You see they mix up now a little bit of philosophy with religion—a little bit of science with the shreds and patches of the supernatural.

Hear this: I said in my lecture the other day that all the clergymen in the world could not get one drop of rain out of the sky. I insist on it. All the prayers on earth cannot produce one drop of

rain. I also said all the clergymen of the world could not save one human life. They tried it last year. They tried it in the United States. The Christian world upon its knees implored God to save one life, and the man died. The man died! Had the man recovered the whole church would have claimed that it was in answer to prayer. The man having died, what does the church say now? What is the answer to this? The Rev. Dr. Thomas says: "There is prayer and there is rain." Good. "Can he that is himself or any one else say there is no possible relation between one and the other?" I do. Let us put it another way. There is rain and there is infidelity; can any one say there is no possible relation between the two? How does Dr. Thomas know that he is not indebted to me for this year's crops? And yet this gentleman really throws out the idea that there is some possible relation between prayer and rain, between rain and health; and he tells us that he would have died twenty-five years ago had it not been for prayer. I doubt it. Prayer is not a medicine. Life depends upon certain facts—not upon prayer. All the prayer in the world cannot take the place of the circulation of the blood. All the prayer in the world is no substitute for digestion. All the prayer in the world cannot

take the place of food; and whenever a man lives by prayer you will find that he eats considerable besides. It will not do. Again: This reverend Doctor says: "Shall we say that all the love of the unseen world"—how does he know there is any love in the unseen world? "and the love of God"—how does he know there is any love in God? "heed not the cries and tears of earth?"

I do not know; but let the gentleman read the history of religious persecution. Let him read the history of those who were put in dungeons, of those who lifted their chained hands to God and mingled prayer with the clank of fetters; men that were in the dungeons simply for loving this God, simply for worshiping this God. And what did God do? Nothing. The chains remained upon the limbs of his worshipers. They remained in the dungeons built by theology, by malice, and hatred; and what did God do? Nothing. Thousands of men were taken from their homes, fagots were piled around their bodies; they were consumed to ashes, and what did God do? Nothing. The sword of extermination was unsheathed, hundreds and thousands of men, women and children perished. Women lifted their hands to God and implored him to protect their children, their daughters; and what did God do?

Nothing. Whole races were enslaved, and the cruel lash was put upon the naked back of toil. What did God do? Nothing. Children were sold from the arms of mothers. All the sweet humanities of life were trodden beneath the brutal foot of creed; and what did God do? Nothing. Human beings, his children, were tracked through swamps by bloodhounds; and what did God do? Nothing. Wild storms sweep over the earth and the shipwrecked go down in the billows; and what does God do? Nothing. There come plague and pestilence and famine. What does God do? Thousands and thousands perish. Little children die upon the withered breasts of mothers; and what does God do? Nothing.

What evidence has Dr. Thomas that the cries and tears of man have ever touched the heart of God? Let us be honest. I appeal to the history of the world; I appeal to the tears, and blood, and agony, and imprisonment, and death of hundreds and millions of the bravest and best. Have they ever touched the heart of the Infinite? Has the hand of help ever been reached from heaven? I do not know; but I do not believe it.

Dr. Thomas tells me that is orthodox Christianity. What right has he to tell what is orthodox Chris-

tianity? He is a heretic. He had too much brain to remain in the Methodist pulpit. He had a doubt—and a doubt is born of an idea. And his doctrine has been declared by his own church to be unorthodox. They have passed on his case and they have found him unconstitutional. What right has he to state what is orthodox? And here is what he says: "Christianity"—orthodox Christianity I suppose he means—"teaches, concerning the future world, that rewards and punishments are carried over from time to eternity; that the principles of the government of God are the same there as here; that character, and not profession determines destiny; and that Humboldt, and Dickens, and all others who have gone and shall go to that world shall receive their just rewards; that souls will always be in the place in which for the time, be it now or a million years hence, they are fitted. That is what Christianity teaches."

If it does, never will I have another word to say against Christianity. It never has taught it. Christianity—orthodox Christianity—teaches that when you draw your last breath you have lost the last opportunity for reformation. Christianity teaches that this little world is the eternal line between time and eternity, and if you do not get religion in this

life, you will be eternally damned in the next. That is Christianity. They say: "Now is the accepted time." If you put it off until you die, that is too late; and the doctrine of the Christian world is that there is no opportunity for reformation in another world. The doctrine of orthodox Christianity is that you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ here in this life, and it will not do to believe on him in the next world. You must believe on him here and that if you fail here, God in his infinite wisdom will never give you another chance. That is orthodox Christianity; and according to orthodox Christianity, the greatest, the best and the sublimest of the world are now in hell. And why is it that they say it is not orthodox Christianity? I have made them ashamed of their doctrine. When I called to their attention the fact that such men as Darwin, such men as Emerson, Dickens, Longfellow, Laplace, Shakespeare, and Humboldt, were in hell, it struck them all at once that the company in heaven would not be very interesting with such men left out.

And now they begin to say: "We think the Lord will give those men another chance." I have succeeded in my mission beyond my most sanguine expectations. I have made orthodox ministers deny

their creeds; I have made them ashamed of their doctrine—and that is glory enough. They will let me in, a few years after I am dead. I admit that the doctrine that God will treat us as we treat others—I admit that is taught by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but it is not taught by the Orthodox church. I want that understood. I admit also that Dr. Thomas is not orthodox, and that he was driven out of the church because he thought God too good to damn men forever without giving them the slightest chance. Why, the Catholic Church is a thousand times better than your Protestant Church upon that question. The Catholic Church believes in purgatory—that is, a place where a fellow can get a chance to make a motion for a new trial.

Dr. Thomas, all I ask of you is to tell all that you think. Tell your congregation whether you believe the Bible was written by divine inspiration. Have the courage and the grandeur to tell your people whether, in your judgment, God ever upheld slavery.

Do not shrink. Do not shirk. Tell your people whether God ever upheld polygamy. Do not shrink. Tell them whether God was ever in favor of religious persecution. Stand right to it. Then tell your people whether you honestly believe that

a good man can suffer for a bad one and the bad one get the credit. Be honor bright. Tell what you really think and there will not be as much difference between you and myself as you imagine.

The next gentleman, I believe, is the Rev. Dr. Lorimer. He comes to the rescue, and I have an idea of his mental capacity from the fact that he is a Baptist. He believes that the infinite God has a choice as to the manner in which a man or babe shall be dampened. This gentleman regards modern infidelity as "pitifully shallow" as to its intellectual conceptions and as to its philosophical views of the universe and of the problems regarding man's place in it and of his destiny. "Pitifully shallow!"

What is the modern conception of the universe? The modern conception is that the universe always has been and forever will be. The modern conception of the universe is that it embraces within its infinite arms all matter, all spirit, all forms of force, all that is, all that has been, all that can be. That is the modern conception of this universe. And this is called "pitiful."

What is the Christian conception? It is that all the matter in the universe is dead, inert, and that back of it is a Jewish Jehovah who made it, and who is now engaged in managing the affairs of this

world. And they even go so far as to say that that Being made experiments in which he signally failed. That Being made man and woman and put them in a garden and allowed them to become totally depraved. That Being of infinite wisdom made hundreds and millions of people when he knew he would have to drown them. That Being peopled a planet like this with men, women and children, knowing that he would have to consign most of them to eternal fire. That is a pitiful conception of the universe. That is an infamous conception of the universe. Give me rather the conception of Spinoza, the conception of Humboldt, of Darwin, of Huxley, of Tyndall and of every other man who has thought. I love to think of the whole universe together as one eternal fact. I love to think that everything is alive; that crystallization is itself a step toward joy. I love to think that when a bud bursts into blossom it feels a thrill. I love to have the universe full of feeling and full of joy, and not full of simple dead, inert matter, managed by an old bachelor for all eternity.

Another thing to which this gentleman objects is that I propose to banish such awful thoughts as the mystery of our origin and our relations to the present and to the possible future from human thought.

I have never said so. Never. I have said, One world at a time. Why? Do not make yourself miserable about another. Why? Because I do not know anything about it, and it may be good. So do not worry. That is all. You do not know where you are going to land. It may be the happy port of heaven. Wait until you get there. It will be time enough to make trouble then. This is what I have said. I have said that the golden bridge of life from gloom emerges, and on shadow rests. I do not know. I admit it. Life is a shadowy strange and winding road on which we travel for a few short steps, just a little way from the cradle with its lullaby of love, to the low and quiet wayside inn where all at last must sleep, and where the only salutation is "Good-Night!" Whether there is a good morning I do not know, but I am willing to wait.

Let us think these high and splendid thoughts. Let us build palaces for the future, but do not let us spend time making dungeons for men who happen to differ from us. I am willing to take the conceptions of Humboldt and Darwin, of Haeckel and Spinoza, and I am willing to compare their splendid conceptions with the doctrine embraced in the Baptist creed. This gentleman has his ideas upon a

variety of questions, and he tells me that, "No one has a right to say that Dickens, Longfellow, and Darwin are castaways." Why not? They were not Christians. They did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures. And, if orthodox religion be true, they are castaways. But he says: "No one has the right to say that orthodoxy condemns to perdition any man who has struggled toward the right, and who has tried to bless the earth he is raised on." That is what I say, but that is not what orthodoxy says. Orthodoxy says that the best man in the world, if he fails to believe in the existence of God, or in the divinity of Christ, will be eternally lost. Does it not say it? Is there an orthodox minister in this town now who will stand up and say that an honest atheist can be saved? He will not. Let any preacher say it, and he will be tried for heresy.

I will tell you what orthodoxy is. A man goes to the day of judgment, and they cross-examine him, and they say to him:

"Did you believe the Bible?"

"No."

"Did you belong to the church?"

"No."

"Did you take care of your wife and children?"

"Yes?"

"Pay your debts?"

"Yes."

"Love your country?"

"Yes."

"Love the whole world?"

"Yes."

"Never made anybody unhappy?"

"Not that I know of. If there is any man or woman that I ever wronged let them stand up and say so. That is the kind of man I am; but," said he, "I did not believe the Bible. I did not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and, to tell you the truth, I did not believe in the existence of God. I now find I was mistaken; but that was my doctrine."

Now, I want to know what, according to the orthodox church, is done with that man? He is sent to hell.

That is their doctrine.

Then the next fellow comes. He says:

"Where did you come from?"

And he looks off kind of stiffly, with his head on one side and he says:

"I came from the gallows. I was just hung."

"What were you hung for?"

"Murdering my wife. She wasn't a Christian either, she got left. The day I was hung I was washed in the blood of the Lamb."

That is Christianity. And they say to him:

"Come in! Let the band play!"

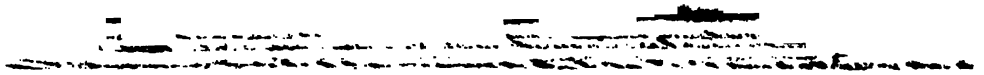
That is orthodox Christianity. Every man that is hanged—there is a minister there, and the minister tells him he is all right. All he has to do is just to believe on the Lord.

Another objection this gentleman has, and that is that I am scurrilous. Scurrilous! And the gentleman, in order to show that he is not scurrilous, calls infidels, "donkeys, serpents, buzzards." That is simply to show that he is not scurrilous.

Dr. Lorimer is also of the opinion that the mind thinks independently of the will; and I propose to prove by him that it does. He is the last man in the world to controvert that doctrine—the last man. In spite of himself his mind absorbed the sermon of another man, and he repeated it as his own. I am satisfied he is an honest man; consequently his mind acted independently of his will, and he furnishes the strongest evidence in favor of my position that it is possible to conceive. I am infinitely obliged to him for the testimony he has unconsciously offered.

He also takes the ground that infidelity debases a man and renders him unfit for the discharge of the highest duties pertaining to life, and that we show the greatest shallowness when we endeavor to overthrow Calvinism. What is Calvinism? It is the doctrine that an infinite God made millions of people, knowing that they would be damned. I have answered that a thousand times. I answer it again. No God has a right to make a mistake, and then damn the mistake. No God has a right to make a failure, and a man who is to be eternally damned is not a conspicuous success. No God has a right to make an investment that will not finally pay a dividend.

The world is getting better, and the ministers, all your life and all mine, have been crying out from the pulpit that we are all going wrong, that immorality was stalking through the land, that crime was about to engulf the world, and yet, in spite of all their prophecies, the world has steadily grown better, and there is more justice, more charity, more kindness, more goodness, and more liberty in the world to-day than ever before. And there is more infidelity in the world to-day than ever before.



REPLY TO

REV. J. HALL AND W. VAN NORDEN

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he had no time to discuss the matter of aiding the needy poor, giving as a reason that there were so many other things that demanded his immediate attention. "The church is always insisting that it is, above all things, a charitable institution; that it collects and distributes many millions every year for the relief of the needy, and it is always quoting: "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor." It is hard to imagine anything of more importance than to relieve the needy, or to succor the oppressed. Of course, I know that the church itself produces nothing, and that it lives on contributions; but its claim is that it receives from those who are able to give, and gives to those who are in urgent need.

I have sometimes thought, that the most uncharit-

He took the view that the cloakmakers had brought their trouble upon themselves, and it was not the duty of the charitable to extend to them direct aid.

Generally speaking, he was not in favor of helping the poor and needy of the city, save in the way employed by the church.

"The experience of centuries," said he, "teaches us that the giving of alms to the poor only encourages them in their idleness and their crimes. The duty of the church is to save men's souls, and to minister to their bodies incidentally.

"It is best to teach people to rely upon their own resources. If the poor felt that they could get material help, they would want it always. In these days if a man or woman can't get along it's their own fault. There is my typewriter. She was brought up in a tenement house. Now she gets two dollars a day, and dresses better than did the lords and ladies of other times. You'll find that where people are poor, it's their own fault.

"After all, happiness does not lie in the enjoyment of material things—it is the soul that makes life worth living. You should come to our Working Girls' Club and see this fact illustrated. There you will see girls who have been working all day, singing hymns and following the leader in prayer."

"Don't you think there are many worthy poor in this city who need material help?" was asked.

"No, sir; I do not," said Mr. Van Norden. "If a man or woman wants money, they should work for it."

"But is employment always to be had?"

"I think it is by Americans. You'll find that most of the people out of work are those who are not adapted to the conditions of this country."

Colonel Robert Ingersoll was asked what he thought of such philosophy.—New York *Morning Advertiser*, March 6, 1892.

able thing in the world is an organized charity. It seems to have the peculiarities of a corporation, and becomes as soulless as its kindred. To use a very old phrase, it generally acts like "a beggar on horseback."

Probably Dr. Hall, in fact, does a great deal for the poor, and I imagine that he must have been irritated or annoyed when he made the answer attributed to him in the *Advertiser*. The good Samaritan may have been in a hurry, but he said nothing about it. The Levites that passed by on the other side seemed to have had other business. Understand me, I am saying nothing against Dr. Hall, but it does seem to me that there are few other matters more important than assisting our needy fellow-men.

Question. What do you think of Mr. Warner Van Norden's sentiments as expressed to the reporter?

Answer. In the first place, I think he is entirely mistaken. I do not think the cloakmakers brought their trouble upon themselves. The wages they receive were and are insufficient to support reasonable human beings. They work for almost nothing, and it is hard for me to understand why they live at all, when life is so expensive and death so

cheap. All they can possibly do is to earn enough one day to buy food to enable them to work the next. Life with them is a perpetual struggle. They live on the edge of death. Under their feet they must feel the side of the grave crumbling, and thus they go through, day by day, month by month, year by year. They are, I presume, sustained by a hope that is never realized.

Mr. Van Norden says that he is not in favor of helping the poor and needy of the city, save in the way employed by the church, and that the experience of centuries teaches us that the giving of alms to the poor only encourages them in their idleness and their crimes.

Is Mr. Van Norden ready to take the ground that when Christ said: "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor," he intended to encourage idleness and crime?

Is it possible that when it was said, "It is better to give than to receive," the real meaning was, It is better to encourage idleness and crime than to receive assistance?

For instance, a man falls into the water. Why should one standing on the shore attempt to rescue him? Could he not properly say: "If all who fall into the water are rescued, it will only encour-

age people to fall into the water; it will make sailors careless, and persons who stand on wharves, will care very little whether they fall in or not. Therefore, in order to make people careful who have not fallen into the water, let those in the water drown." In other words, why should anybody be assisted, if assistance encourages carelessness, or idleness, or negligence?

According to Mr. Van Norden, charity is out of place in this world, kindness is a mistake, and hospitality springs from a lack of philosophy. In other words, all should take the consequences of their acts, not only, but the consequences of the acts of others.

If I knew this doctrine to be true, I should still insist that men should be charitable on their own account. A man without pity, no matter how intelligent he may be, is at best only an intellectual beast, and if by withholding all assistance we could finally people the world with those who are actually self-supporting, we would have a population without sympathy, without charity—that is to say, without goodness. In my judgment, it would be far better that none should exist.

Mr. Van Norden takes the ground that the duty of the church is to save men's souls, and to minister

to their bodies incidentally. I think that conditions have a vast deal to do with morality and goodness. If you wish to change the conduct of your fellow-men, the first thing to do is to change their conditions, their surroundings ; in other words, to help them to help themselves—help them to get away from bad influences, away from the darkness of ignorance, away from the temptations of poverty and want, not only into the light intellectually, but into the climate of prosperity. It is useless to give a hungry man a religious tract, and it is almost useless to preach morality to those who are so situated that the necessity of the present, the hunger of the moment, overrides every other consideration. There is a vast deal of sophistry in hunger, and a good deal of persuasion in necessity.

Prosperity is apt to make men selfish. They imagine that because they have succeeded, others and all others, might or may succeed. If any man will go over his own life honestly, he will find that he has not always succeeded because he was good, or that he has always failed because he was bad. He will find that many things happened with which he had nothing to do, for his benefit, and that, after all is said and done, he cannot account for all of his successes by his absolute goodness. So, if a man

will think of all the bad things he has done—of all the bad things he wanted to do—of all the bad things he would have done had he had the chance, and had he known that detection was impossible, he will find but little foundation for egotism.

Question. What do you say to this language of Mr. Van Norden. "It is best to teach people to rely upon their own resources. If the poor felt that they could get material help they would want it always, and in this day, if a man and woman cannot get along, it is their own fault"?

Answer. All I can say is that I do not agree with him. Often there are many more men in a certain trade than there is work for such men. Often great factories shut down, leaving many thousands out of employment. You may say that it was the fault of these men that they learned that trade; that they might have known it would be overcrowded; so you may say it was the fault of the capitalist to start a factory in that particular line, because he should have known that it was to be overdone.

As no man can look very far into the future, the truth is it was nobody's fault, and without fault thousands and thousands are thrown out of employment. Competition is so sharp, wages are so small, that to be out of employment for a few weeks means want. You

cannot say that this is the fault of the man who wants bread. He certainly did not wish to go hungry; neither did he deliberately plan a failure. He did the best he could. There are plenty of bankers who fail in business, not because they wish to fail; so there are plenty of professional men who cannot make a living, yet it may not be their fault; and there are others who get rich, and it may not be by reason of their virtues.

Without doubt, there are many people in the city of New York who cannot make a living. Competition is too sharp; life is too complex; consequently the percentage of failures is large. In savage life there are few failures, but in civilized life there are many. There are many thousands out of work and out of food in Berlin to-day. It can hardly be said to be their fault. So there are many thousands in London, and every other great city of the world. You cannot account for all this want by saying that the people who want are entirely to blame.

A man gets rich, and he is often egotistic enough to think that his wealth was the result of his own unaided efforts; and he is sometimes heartless enough to say that others should get rich by following his example.

Mr. Van Norden states that he has a typewriter who gets two dollars a day, and that she dresses better than the lords and ladies did of olden times. He must refer to the times of the Garden of Eden. Out of two dollars a day one must live, and there is very little left for gorgeous robes. I hardly think a lady is to be envied because she receives two dollars a day, and the probability is that the manner in which she dresses on that sum—having first deducted the expenses of living—is not calculated to excite envy.

The philosophy of Mr. Van Norden seems to be concentrated into this line: "Where people are poor it is their own fault." Of course this is the death of all charity.

We are then informed by this gentleman that "happiness does not lie in the enjoyment of material things—that it is the soul that makes life worth living."

Is it the soul without pity that makes life worth living? Is it the soul in which the blossom of charity has never shed its perfume that makes life so desirable? Is it the soul, having all material things, wrapped in the robes of prosperity, and that says to all the poor: It is your own fault; die of hunger if you must—that makes life worth living?

It may be asked whether it is worth while for such a soul to live.

If this is the philosophy of Mr. Van Norden, I do not wish to visit his working girls' club, or to "hear girls who have been working all day singing hymns and following the leader in prayer." Why should a soul without pity pray? Why should any one ask God to be merciful to the poor if he is not merciful himself? For my own part, I would rather see poor people eat than to hear them pray. I would rather see them clothed comfortably than to see them shivering, and at the same time hear them sing hymns.

It does not seem possible that any man can say that there are no worthy poor in this city who need material help. Neither does it seem possible that any man can say to one who is starving that if he wants money he must work for it. There are hundreds and thousands in this city willing to work who can find no employment. There are good and pure women standing between their children and starvation, living in rooms worse than cells in penitentiaries—giving their own lives to their children—hundreds and hundreds of martyrs bearing the cross of every suffering, worthy of the reverence and love of mankind. So there are men wandering about

these streets in search of work, willing to do anything to feed the ones they love.

Mr. Van Norden has not done himself justice. I do not believe that he expresses his real sentiments. But, after all, why should we expect charity in a church that believes in the dogma of eternal pain? Why cannot the rich be happy here in their palaces, while the poor suffer and starve in huts, when these same rich expect to enjoy heaven forever, with all the unbelievers in hell? Why should the agony of time interfere with their happiness, when the agonies of eternity will not and cannot affect their joy? But I have nothing against Dr. John Hall or Mr. Van Norden—only against their ideas.

REPLY TO THE REV. DR. PLUMB.

A REPLY TO THE REV. DR. PLUMB.*

Question. Last Sunday the Rev. Dr. Plumb paid some attention to the lecture which you delivered here on the 23rd of October. Have you read a report of it, and what have you to say?

Answer. Dr. Plumb attacks not only myself, but the Rev. Mr. Mills. I do not know the position that Mr. Mills takes, but from what Dr. Plumb says, I suppose that he has mingled a little philosophy with his religion and some science with his superstition. Dr. Plumb appears to have successfully avoided both. His manners do not appear to me to be of the best. Why should he call an opponent coarse and blasphemous, simply because he does not happen to believe as he does? Is it blasphemous to say that this "poor" world never was visited by a Redeemer from Heaven, a majestic being—unique—peculiar—who "trod the sea and hushed the storm and raised the dead"? Why does Dr. Plumb call this world a

* Boston, 1882.

"poor" world? According to his creed, it was created by infinite wisdom, infinite goodness and infinite power. How dare he call the work of such a being "poor"?

Is it not blasphemous for a Boston minister to denounce the work of the Infinite and say to God that he made a "poor" world? If I believed this world had been made by an infinitely wise and good Being, I should certainly insist that this is not a poor world, but, on the contrary, a perfect world. I would insist that everything that happens is for the best. Whether it looks wise or foolish to us, I would insist that the fault we thought we saw, lies in us and not in the infinitely wise and benevolent Creator.

Dr. Plumb may love God, but he certainly regards him as a poor mechanic and a failure as a manufacturer. There Dr. Plumb, like all religious preachers, takes several things for granted; things that have not been established by evidence, and things which in their nature cannot be established.

He tells us that this poor world was visited by a mighty Redeemer from Heaven. How does he know? Does he know where heaven is? Does he know that any such place exists? Is he perfectly

sure that an infinite God would be foolish enough to make people who needed a redeemer?

He also says that this Being "trod the sea, hushed the storm and raised the dead." Is there any evidence that this Being trod the sea? Any more evidence than that Venus rose from the foam of the ocean? Any evidence that he hushed the storm any more than there is that the storm comes from the cave of Æolus? Is there any evidence that he raised the dead? How would it be possible to prove that the dead were raised? How could we prove such a thing if it happened now? Who would believe the evidence? As a matter of fact, the witnesses themselves would not believe and could not believe until raising of the dead became so general as to be regarded as natural.

Dr. Plumb knows, if he knows anything, that gospel gossip is the only evidence he has, or anybody has, that Christ trod the sea, hushed the storm and raised the dead. He also knows, if he knows anything, that these stories were not written until Christ himself had been dead for at least four generations. He knows also that these accounts were written at a time when the belief in miracles was almost universal, and when everything that actually happened was regarded of no particular importance, and only

the things that did not happen were carefully written out with all the details.

So Dr. Plumb says that this man who hushed the storm "spake as never man spake." Did the Doctor ever read Zeno? Zeno, who denounced human slavery many years before Christ was born? Did he ever read Epicurus, one of the greatest of the Greeks? Has he read anything from Buddha? Has he read the dialogues between Arjuna and Krishna? If he has, he knows that every great and splendid utterance of Christ was uttered centuries before he lived. Did he ever read Lao-tsze? If he did—and this man lived many centuries before the coming of our Lord—he knows that Lao-tsze said "we should render benefits for injuries. We should love our enemies, and we should not resist evil." So it will hardly do now to say that Christ spake as never man spake, because he repeated the very things that other men had said.

So he says that I am endeavoring to carry people back to a dimly groping Socrates or a vague Confucius. Did Dr. Plumb ever read Confucius? Only a little while ago a book was published by Mr. Forlong showing the origin of the principal religion and the creeds that have been taught. In this book you will find the cream of Buddha, of Christ, of Zoroaster,

and you will also find a few pages devoted to the philosophy of Confucius; and after you have read the others, then read what Confucius says, and you will find that his philosophy rises like a monolith touching the clouds, while the creeds and sayings of the others appear like heaps of stone or piles of rubbish. The reason of this is that Confucius was not simply a sentimentalist. He was not controlled entirely by feeling, but he had intelligence—a great brain in which burned the torch of reason. Read Confucius, and you will think that he must have known the sciences of to-day; that is to say, the conclusions that have been reached by modern thinkers. It could have been easily said of Confucius in his day that he spake as never man had spoken, and it may be that after you read him you will change your mind just a little as to the wisdom and the intelligence contained in many of the sayings of our Lord.

Dr. Plumb charges that Mr. Mills is trying to reconstruct theology. Whether he is right in this charge I do not know, but I do know that I am not trying to reconstruct theology. I am endeavoring to destroy it. I have no more confidence in theology than I have in astrology or in the black art. Theology is a science that exists wholly independent of facts, and that reaches conclusions without the

assistance of evidence. It also scorns experience and does what little it can to do away with thought.

I make a very great distinction between theology and real religion. I can conceive of no religion except usefulness. Now, here we are, men and women in this world, and we have certain faculties, certain senses. There are things that we can ascertain, and by developing our brain we can avoid mistakes, keep a few thorns out of our feet, a few thistles out of our hands, a few diseases from our flesh. In my judgment, we should use all our senses, gathering information from every possible quarter, and this information should be only used for the purpose of ascertaining the facts, for finding out the conditions of well-being, to the end that we may add to the happiness of ourselves and fellows.

In other words, I believe in intellectual veracity and also in mental hospitality. To me reason is the final arbiter, and when I say reason, I mean my reason. It may be a very poor light, the flame small and flickering, but, after all, it is the only light I have, and never with my consent shall any preacher blow it out.

Now, Dr. Plumb thinks that I am trying to despoil my fellow-men of their greatest inheritance; that is

to say, divine Christ. Why do you call Christ good? Is it because he was merciful? Then why do you put him above mercy? Why do you call Christ good? Is it because he was just? Why do you put him before justice? Suppose it should turn out that no such person as Christ ever lived. What harm would that do justice or mercy? Wouldn't the tear of pity be as pure as now, and wouldn't justice, holding aloft her scales, from which she blows even the dust of prejudice, be as noble, as admirable as now? Is it not better to love justice and mercy than to love a name, and when you put a name above justice, above mercy, are you sure that you are benefiting your fellow-men?

If Dr. Plumb wanted to answer me, why did he not take my argument instead of my motive? Why did he not point out my weakness instead of telling the consequences that would follow from my action? We have nothing to do with the consequences. I said that to believe without evidence, or in spite of evidence, was superstition. If that definition is correct, Dr. Plumb is a superstitious man, because he believes at least without evidence. What evidence has he that Christ was God? In the nature of things, how could he have evidence? The only evidence he pretends to have is the dream

of Joseph, and he does not know that Joseph ever dreamed the dream, because Joseph did not write an account of his dream, so that Dr. Plumb has only hearsay for the dream, and the dream is the foundation of his creed.

Now, when I say that that is superstition, Dr. Plumb charges me with being a burglar—a coarse, blasphemous burglar—who wishes to rob somebody of some great blessing. Dr. Plumb would not hesitate to tell a Mohammedan that Mohammed was an impostor. He would tell a Mormon in Utah that Joseph Smith was a vulgar liar and that Brigham Young was no better. In other words, if in Turkey, he would be a coarse and blasphemous burglar, and he would follow the same profession in Utah. So probably he would tell the Chinese that Confucius was an ignorant wretch and that their religion was idiotic, and the Chinese priest would denounce Dr. Plumb as a very coarse and blasphemous burglar, and Dr. Plumb would be perfectly astonished that a priest could be so low, so impudent and malicious.

Of course my wonder is not excited. I have become used to it.

If Dr. Plumb would think, if he would exercise his imagination a little and put himself in the place

of others, he would think, in all probability, better things of his opponents. I do not know Dr. Plumb, and yet I have no doubt that he is a good and sincere man; a little superstitious, superficial, and possibly, mingled with his many virtues, there may be a little righteous malice.

The Rev. Mr. Mills used to believe as Dr. Plumb does now, and I suppose he has changed for reasons that were sufficient for him. So I believe him to be an honest, conscientious man, and so far as I am concerned, I have no objection to Mr. Mills doing what little he can to get all the churches to act together. He may never succeed, but I am not responsible for that.

So I have no objection to Dr. Plumb preaching what he believes to be the gospel. I admit that he is honest when he says that an infinitely good God made a poor world; that he made man and woman and put them in the Garden of Eden, and that this same God before that time had manufactured a devil, and that when he manufactured this devil, he knew that he would corrupt the man and woman that he had determined to make; that he could have defeated the devil, but that for a wise purpose, he allowed his Satanic Majesty to succeed; that at the time he allowed him to succeed, he knew that in

consequence of his success that he (God) in about fifteen or sixteen hundred years would be compelled to drown the whole world with the exception of eight people. These eight people he kept for seed. At the time he kept them for seed, he knew that they were totally depraved, that they were saturated with the sin of Adam and Eve, and that their children would be their natural heirs. He also knew at the time he allowed the devil to succeed, that he (God), some four thousand years afterward, would be compelled to be born in Palestine as a babe, to learn the carpenter's trade, and to go about the country for three years preaching to the people and discussing with the rabbis of his chosen people, and he also knew that these chosen people—these people who had been governed and educated by him, to whom he had sent a multitude of prophets, would at that time be so savage that they would crucify him, although he would be at that time the only sinless being who had ever stood upon the earth. This he knew would be the effect of his government, of his education of his chosen people. He also knew at the time he allowed the devil to succeed, that in consequence of that success a vast majority of the human race would become eternal convicts in the prison of hell.

All this he knew, and yet Dr. Plumb insists that he was and is infinitely wise, infinitely powerful and infinitely good. What would this God have done if he had lacked wisdom, or power, or goodness?

Of all the religions that man has produced, of all the creeds of savagery, there is none more perfectly absurd than Christianity.

A REPLY TO

THE NEW YORK CLERGY ON SUPERSTITION.*

Question. Have you followed the controversy, or rather, the interest manifested in the letters to the *Journal* which have followed your lecture of Sunday, and what do you think of them?

Answer. I have read the letters and reports that have been published in the *Journal.* Some of them seem to be very sincere, some not quite honest, and some a little of both.

The Rev. Robert S. MacArthur takes the ground that very many Christians do not believe in a personal devil, but are still Christians. He states that they hold that the references in the New Testament to the devil are simply to personifications of evil, and do not apply to any personal existence. He says that he could give the names of a number of pastors who hold such views. He does not state what his view is. Consequently, I do not know whether he is a believer in a personal devil or not.

New York Journal, 1898. An Interview. (549)

Magdalene, and how did they come to count these "personifications of evil"? If the devils, after all, are only "personifications of evil," then, of course, they cannot be numbered. They are all one. There may be different manifestations, but, in fact, there can be but one, and yet Mary Magdalene had seven.

Dr. MacArthur states that I put up a man of straw, and then vigorously beat him down. Now, the question is, do I attack a man of straw? I take it for granted that Christians to some extent, at least, believe in their creeds. I suppose they regard the Bible as the inspired word of God; that they believe in the fall of man, in the atonement, in salvation by faith, in the resurrection and ascension of Christ. I take it for granted that they believe these things. Of course, the only evidence I have is what they say. Possibly that cannot be depended upon. They may be dealing only in the "personification of truth."

When I charge the orthodox Christians with believing these things, I am told that I am far behind the religious thinking of the hour, but after all, this "man of straw" is quite powerful. Prof. Briggs attacked this "man of straw," and the straw man turned on him and put him out. A preacher by

the name of Smith, a teacher in some seminary out in Ohio, challenged this "man of straw," and the straw man put him out.

Both these reverend gentlemen were defeated by the straw man, and if the Rev. Dr. MacArthur will explain to his congregation, I mean only explain what he calls the "religious thinking of the hour," the "straw man" will put him out too.

Dr. MacArthur finds fault with me because I put into the minds of representative thinkers of to-day the opinions of medieval monks, which leading religious teachers long ago discarded. Will Dr. MacArthur have the goodness to point out one opinion that I have put into the minds of representative thinkers—that is, of orthodox thinkers—that any orthodox religious teacher of to-day has discarded? Will he have the kindness to give just one?

In my lecture on "Superstition" I did say that to deny the existence of evil spirits, or to deny the existence of the devil, is to deny the truth of the New Testament; and that to deny the existence of these imps of darkness is to contradict the words of Jesus Christ. I did say that if we give up the belief in devils we must give up the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, and we must give up the divinity of Christ. Upon that declaration I

stand, because if devils do not exist, then Jesus Christ was mistaken, or we have not in the New Testament a true account of what he said and of what he pretended to do. If the New Testament gives a true account of his words and pretended actions, then he did claim to cast out devils. That was his principal business. That was his certificate of divinity, casting out devils. That authenticated his mission and proved that he was superior to the hosts of darkness.

Now, take the devil out of the New Testament, and you also take the veracity of Christ; with that veracity you take the divinity; with that divinity you take the atonement, and when you take the atonement, the great fabric known as Christianity becomes a shapeless ruin.

Now, let Dr. MacArthur answer this, and answer it not like a minister, but like a man. Ministers are unconsciously a little unfair. They have a little tendency to what might be called a natural crook. They become spiritual when they ought to be candid. They become a little ingenious and pious when they ought to be frank; and when really driven into a corner, they clasp their hands, they look upward, and they cry "*Blasphemy!*" I do not mean by this that they are dishonest. I simply mean that they are illogical.

Dr. MacArthur tells us also that Spain is not a representative of progressive religious teachers. I admit that. There are no progressive religious teachers in Spain, and right here let me make a remark. If religion rests on an inspired revelation, it is incapable of progress. It may be said that year after year we get to understand it better, but if it is not understood when given, why is it called a "revelation"? There is no progress in the multiplication table. Some men are better mathematicians than others, but the old multiplication table remains the same. So there can be no progress in a revelation from God.

Now, Spain—and that is the great mistake, the great misfortune—has remained orthodox. That is to say, the Spaniards have been true to their superstition. Of course the Rev. Dr. MacArthur will not admit that Catholicism is Christianity, and I suppose that the pope would hardly admit that a Baptist is a very successful Christian. The trouble with Spain is, and the trouble with the Baptist Church is, that neither of them has progressed to any great extent.

Now, in my judgment, what is called religion must grow better as man grows better, simply because it was produced by man. and the better man is, the

nearer civilized he is, the better, the nearer civilized, will be what he calls his religion; and if the Baptist religion has progressed, it is a demonstration that it was not originally founded on a revelation from God.

In my lecture I stated that we had no right to make any distinction between the actions of infinite wisdom and goodness, and that if God created and governs this world we ought to thank him, if we thanked him at all, for all that happens; that we should thank him just as heartily for famine and cyclone as for sunshine and harvest, and that if President McKinley thanked God for the victory at Santiago, he also should have thanked him for sending the yellow fever.

I stand by these words. A finite being has no right to make any distinction between the actions of the infinitely good and wise. If God governs this world, then everything that happens is the very best that could happen. When A murders B, the best thing that could happen to A is to be a murderer and the best thing that could have happened to B was to be murdered. There is no escape from this if the world is governed by infinite wisdom and goodness.

It will not do to try and dodge by saying that man is free. This God who made man and made him free

knew exactly how he would use his freedom, and consequently this God cannot escape the responsibility for the actions of men. He made them. He knew exactly what they would do. He is responsible.

If I could turn a piece of wood into a human being, and I knew that he would murder a man, who is the real murderer? But if Dr. MacArthur would think as much as he preaches, he would come much nearer agreeing with me.

The Rev. Dr. J. Lewis Parks is very sorry that he cannot discuss Ingersoll's address, because to do so would be dignifying Ingersoll. Of course I deeply regret the refusal of Dr. J. Lewis Parks to discuss the address. I dislike to be compelled to go to the end of my life without being dignified. At the same time I will forgive the Rev. Dr. J. Lewis Parks for not answering me, because I know that he cannot.

The Rev. Dr. Moldehnke, whose name seems chiefly made of consonants, denounces me as a scoffer and as illogical, and says that Christianity is not founded upon the devil, but upon Christ. He further says that we do not believe in such a thing as a devil in human form, but we know that there is evil, and that evil we call the devil. He hides his

head under the same leaf with Dr. MacArthur by calling the devil evil.

Now, is this gentleman willing to say that all the allusions to the devil in the Old and New Testaments can be harmonized with the idea that the devil is simply a personification of evil? Can he say this and say it honestly?

But the Rev. Dr. Moldehnke, I think, seems to be consistent; seems to go along with the logic of his creed. He says that the yellow fever, if it visited our soldiers, came from God, and that we should thank God for it. He does not say the soldiers should thank God for it, or that those who had it should thank God for it, but that we should thank God for it, and there is this wonderful thing about Christianity. It enables us to bear with great fortitude, with a kind of sublime patience, the misfortunes of others.

He says that this yellow fever works out God's purposes. Of course I am not as well acquainted with the Deity as the Rev. Moldehnke appears to be. I have not the faintest idea of what God's purposes are. He works, even according to his messengers, in such a mysterious way, that with the little reason I have I find it impossible to follow him. Why God should have any purpose that

could be worked out with yellow fever, or cholera, or why he should ever ask the assistance of tape-worms, or go in partnership with cancers, or take in the plague as an assistant, I have never been able to understand. I do not pretend to know. I admit my ignorance, and after all, the Rev. Dr. Moldehnke may be right. It may be that everything that happens is for the best. At the same time, I do not believe it.

There is a little old story on this subject that throws some light on the workings of the average orthodox mind.

One morning the son of an old farmer came in and said to his father, "One of the ewe lambs is dead."

"Well," said the father; "that is all for the best. Twins never do very well, any how."

The next morning the son reported the death of the other lamb, and the old man said, "Well, that is all for the best; the old ewe will have more wool."

The next morning the son said, "The old ewe is dead."

"Well," replied the old man; "that may be for the best, but I don't see it this morning."

The Rev. Mr. Hamlin has the goodness to say

that my influence is on the wane. This is an admission that I have some, for which I am greatly obliged to him. He further states that all my arguments are easily refuted, but fails to refute them on the ground that such refutation might be an advertisement for me.

Now, if Mr. Hamlin would think a little, he would see that there are some things in the lecture on "Superstition" worth the while even of a Methodist minister to answer.

Does Mr. Hamlin believe in the existence of the devil? If he does, will he have the goodness to say who created the devil? He may say that God created him, as he is the creator of all. Then I ask Mr. Hamlin this question: Why did God create a successful rival? When God created the devil, did he not know at that time that he was to make this world? That he was to create Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden, and did he not know that this devil would tempt this Adam and Eve? That in consequence of that they would fall? That in consequence of that he would have to drown all their descendants except eight? That in consequence of that he himself would have to be born into this world as a Judean peasant? That he would have to be crucified and suffer for

the sins of these people who had been misled by this devil that he deliberately created, and that after all he would be able only to save a few Methodists?

Will the Rev. Mr. Hamlin have the goodness to answer this? He can answer it as mildly as he pleases, so that in any event it will be no advertisement for him.

The Rev. Mr. F. J. Belcher pays me a great compliment, for which I now return my thanks. He has the goodness to say, "Ingersoll in many respects is like Voltaire." I think no finer compliment has been paid me by any gentleman occupying a pulpit, for many years, and again I thank the Rev. Mr. Belcher.

The Rev. W. D. Buchanan, does not seem to be quite fair. He says that every utterance of mine impresses men with my insincerity, and that every argument I bring forward is specious, and that I spend my time in ringing the changes on arguments that have been answered over and over again for hundreds of years.

Now, Dr. Buchanan should remember that he ought not to attack motives; that you cannot answer an argument by vilifying the man who makes it. You must answer not the man, but the argument.

Another thing this reverend gentleman should remember, and that is that no argument is old until it has been answered. An argument that has not been answered, although it has been put forward for many centuries, is still as fresh as a flower with the dew on its breast. It never is old until it has been answered.

It is well enough for this gentleman to say that these arguments have been answered, and if they have and he knows that they have, of course it will be but a little trouble to him to repeat these answers.

Now, my dear Dr. Buchanan, I wish to ask you some questions. Do you believe in a personal devil? Do you believe that the bodies of men and women become tenements for little imps and goblins and demons? Do you believe that the devil used to lead men and women astray? Do you believe the stories about devils that you find in the Old and New Testaments?

Now, do not tell me that these questions have been answered long ago. Answer them now. And if you say the devil does exist, that he is a person, that he is an enemy of God, then let me ask you another question: Why should this devil punish souls in hell for rebelling against God? Why should the devil, who is an enemy of God, help punish God's

enemies? This may have been answered many times, but one more repetition will do but little harm.

Another thing: Do you believe in the eternity of punishment? Do you believe that God is the keeper of an eternal prison, the doors of which open only to receive sinners, and do you believe that eternal punishment is the highest expression of justice and mercy?

If you had the power to change a stone into a human being, and you knew that that human being would be a sinner and finally go to hell and suffer eternal torture, would you not leave it stone? And if, knowing this, you changed the stone into a man, would you not be a fiend? Now, answer this fairly. I want nothing spiritual; nothing with the Presbyterian flavor; just good, honest talk, and tell us how that is.

I say to you that if there is a place of eternal torment or misery for any of the children of men —I say to you that your God is a wild beast, an insane fiend, whom I abhor and despise with every drop of my blood.

At the same time you may say whether you are up, according to Dr. MacArthur, with the religious thinking of the hour.

The Rev. J. W. Campbell I rather like. He appears to be absolutely sincere. He is orthodox—true blue. He believes in a devil; in an acting, thinking devil, and a clever devil. Of course he does not think this devil is as stout as God, but he is quicker; not quite as wise, but a little more cunning.

According to Mr. Campbell, the devil is the bunco steerer of the universe—king of the green goods men; but, after all, Mr. Campbell will not admit that if this devil does not exist the Christian creeds all crumble, but I think he will admit that if the devil does not exist, then Christ was mistaken, or that the writers of the New Testament did not truthfully give us his utterances.

Now, if Christ was mistaken about the existence of the devil, may be he was mistaken about the existence of God. In other words, if Christ made a mistake, then he was ignorant. Then we cannot say he was divine, although ignorance has generally believed in divinity. So I do not see exactly how Mr. Campbell can say that if the devil does not exist the Christian creeds do not crumble, and when I say Christian creeds I mean orthodox creeds. Is there any orthodox Christian creed without the devil in it?

Now, if we throw away the devil we throw away

original sin, the fall of man, and we throw away the atonement. Of this arch the devil is the keystone. Remove him, the arch falls.

Now, how can you say that an orthodox Christian creed remains intact without crumbling when original sin, the fall of man, the atonement and the existence of the devil are all thrown aside?

Of course if you mean by Christianity, acting like Christ, being good, forgiving, that is another matter, but that is not Christianity. Orthodox Christians say that a man must believe on Christ, must have faith, and that to act as Christ did, is not enough; that a man who acts exactly as Christ did, dying without faith, would go to hell. So when Mr. Campbell speaks of a Christian, I suppose he means an orthodox Christian.

Now, Dr. Campbell not only knows that the devil exists, but he knows a good deal about him. He knows that he can assume every conceivable disguise or shape; that he can go about like a roaring lion; that at another time he is a god of this world; on another occasion a dragon, and in the afternoon of the same day may be Lucifer, an angel of light, and all the time, I guess, a prince of lies. So he often assumes the disguise of the serpent.

So the Doctor thinks that when the devil invited

Christ into the wilderness to tempt him, that he adopted some disguise that made him more than usually attractive. Does the Doctor think that Christ could not see through the disguise? Was it possible for the devil with a mask to fool God, his creator? Was it possible for the devil to tempt Christ by offering him the kingdoms of the earth when they already belonged to Christ, and when Christ knew that the devil had no title, and when the devil knew that Christ knew that he had no title, and when the devil knew that Christ knew that he was the devil, and when the devil knew that he was Christ? Does the reverend gentleman still think that it was the disguise of the devil that tempted Christ?

I would like some of these questions answered, because I have a very inquiring mind.

So Mr. Campbell tells us—and it is very good and comforting of him—that there is a time coming when the devil shall deceive the nations no more. He also tells us that God is more powerful than the devil, and that he is going to put an end to him.

Will Mr. Campbell have the goodness to tell me why God made the devil? If he is going to put an end to him why did he start him? Was it not a waste of raw material to make him? Was it not unfair to let this devil, so powerful, so cunning, so

attractive, into the Garden of Eden, and put Adam and Eve, who were then scarcely half dry, within his power, and not only Adam and Eve within his power, but their descendants, so that the slime of the serpent has been on every babe, and so that, in consequence of what happened in the Garden of Eden, flames will surround countless millions in the presence of the most merciful God?

Now, it may be that the Rev. Dr. Campbell can explain all these things. He may not care to do it for my benefit, but let him think of his own congregation; of the lambs he is protecting from the wolves of doubt and thought.

The Rev. Henry Frank appears to be a man of exceedingly good sense; one who thinks for himself, and who has the courage of his convictions. Of course I am sorry that he does not agree with me, but I have become used to that, and so I thank him for the truths he utters.

He does not believe in the existence of a personal devil, and I guess by following him up we would find that he did not believe in the existence of a personal God, or in the inspiration of the Scriptures. In fact, he tells us that he has given up the infallibility of the Bible. At the same time, he says it is the most perfect compendium of religious and moral

thought. In that I think he is a little mistaken. There is a vast deal of irreligion in the Bible, and there is a good deal of immoral thought in the Bible; but I agree with him that it is neither inspired nor infallible.

The Rev. E. C. J. Kraeling, pastor of the Zion Lutheran Church, declares that those who do not believe in a personal God do not believe in a personal Satan, and *vice versa*. The one, he says, necessitates the other. In this I do not think he is quite correct. I think many people believe in a personal God who do not believe in a personal devil, but I know of none who do believe in a personal devil who do not also believe in a personal God. The orthodox generally believe in both of them, and for many centuries Christians spoke with great respect of the devil. They were afraid of him.

But I agree with the Rev. Mr. Kraeling when he says that to deny a personal Satan is to deny the infallibility of God's word. I agree with this because I suppose by "God's word" he means the Bible.

He further says, and I agree with him, that a "Christian" needs no scientific argument on which to base his belief in the personality of Satan. That certainly is true, and if a Christian does need a

scientific argument it is equally true that he never will have one.

You see this word "Science" means something that somebody knows; not something that somebody guesses, or wishes, or hopes, or believes, but something that somebody knows.

Of course there cannot be any scientific argument proving the existence of the devil. At the same time I admit, as the Rev. Mr. Kraeling says, and I thank him for his candor, that the Bible does prove the existence of the devil from Genesis to the Apocalypse, and I do agree with him that the "revealed word" teaches the existence of a personal devil, and that all truly orthodox Christians believe that there is a personal devil, and the Rev. Mr. Kraeling proves this by the fall of man, and he proves that without this devil there could be no redemption for the evil spirits; so he brings forward the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. At the same time that Mr. Kraeling agrees with me as to what the Bible says, he insists that I bring no arguments, that I blaspheme, and then he drops into humor and says that if any further arguments are needed to prove the existence of the devil, that I furnish them.

How a man believing the creed of the orthodox

Mr. Kraeling can have anything like a sense of humor is beyond even my imagination.

Now, I want to ask Mr. Kraeling a few questions, and I will ask him the same questions that I ask all orthodox people in my lecture on "Superstition."

Now, Mr. Kraeling believes that this world was created by a being of infinite wisdom, power and goodness, and that the world he created has been governed by him.

Now, let me ask the reverend gentleman a few plain questions, with the request that he answer them without mist or mystery. If you, Mr. Kraeling, had the power to make a world, would you make an exact copy of this? Would you make a man and woman, put them in a garden, knowing that they would be deceived, knowing that they would fall? Knowing that all the consequences believed in by orthodox Christians would follow from that fall? Would you do it? And would you make your world so as to provide for earthquakes and cyclones? Would you create the seeds of disease and scatter them in the air and water? Would you so arrange matters as to produce cancers? Would you provide for plague and pestilence? Would you so make your world that life should feed on life, that the quivering flesh should

be torn by tooth and beak and claw? Would you?

Now, answer fairly. Do not quote Scripture; just answer, and be honest.

Would you make different races of men? Would you make them of different colors, and would you so make them that they would persecute and enslave each other? Would you so arrange matters that millions and millions should toil through many generations, paid only by the lash on the back? Would you have it so that millions and millions of babes would be sold from the breasts of mothers? Be honest.

Would you provide for religious persecution? For the invention and use of instruments of torture? Would you see to it that the rack was not forgotten, and that the fagot was not overlooked or unlighted? Would you make a world in which the wrong would triumph? Would you make a world in which innocence would not be a shield? Would you make a world where the best would be loaded with chains? Where the best would die in the darkness of dungeons? Where the best would make scaffolds sacred with their blood?

Would you make a world where hypocrisy and cunning and fraud should represent God, and

where meanness would suck the blood of honest credulity?

Would you provide for the settlement of all difficulties by war? Would you so make your world that the weak would bear the burdens, so that woman would be a slave, so that children would be trampled upon as though they were poisonous reptiles? Would you fill the woods with wild beasts? Would you make a few volcanoes to overwhelm your children? Would you provide for earthquakes that would swallow them? Would you make them ignorant, savage, and fill their minds with all the phantoms of horror? Would you?

Now, it will only take you a few moments to answer these questions, and if you say you would, then I shall be satisfied that you believe in the orthodox God, and that you are as bad as he. If you say you would not, I will admit that there is a little dawn of intelligence in your brain.

At the same time I want it understood with regard to all these ministers that I am a friend of theirs. I am trying to civilize their congregations, so that the congregations may allow the ministers to develop, to grow, to become really and truly intelligent. The process is slow, but it is sure.

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